



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0273IN-1 for Southwest Dubois County School Corporation LEA for Southern Indiana Education Center

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The consortium proposes a comprehensive that will positively affect children and youth, teachers and classrooms, and families and communities.</p> <p>The academic plan includes higher order thinking, decision making thought processes, study skills development, and critical thinking and problem solving skills. The plan extends to the whole child by, addressing students' social-emotional needs utilizing a nationally recognized program. A personalized learning environment will include individualized attention by way of mentors and children will be taught leadership skills and ownership of their educational journey.</p> <p>Technology will be employed to maintain an automated system that helps to shepherd students toward their graduation destination and beyond to college and careers. Technology will also be used for achievement data management by students.</p> <p>The plan proposes continuously trained, highly effective teachers that work in an environment of collaboration. Staff performance will be monitored by teacher/principal evaluation systems with academic performance measurements.</p> <p>Key stakeholders from each of the school districts have been in a series of strategic thinking meetings and are expected to partner with the consortium.</p> <p>A logic model for a project of hope was included in the proposal. It included current and needed resources, the anticipated activities and who is responsible with short, medium, and long term goals.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The consortium is comprised of 11 rural school districts representing 45 schools. It is stated in B3 that all grades within the 11 districts will participate. Elementary, middle, and high schools are listed in the plan so it appears that all schools are participating and all students will benefit.</p> <p>There was no specific rationale stated, in the section, for participation. However, the fact that approximately 50% of the student population can be categorized as participating in the free/reduced meal program with just under 50% identified as high need students could be considered justification.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Section A3 was missing from the application. However, a comprehensive logic model for Project Hope was presented in the proposal, just before A2. It included a high-quality plan for scaling up its operations. Goals and activities were</p>		

presented, the responsible parties and people available to implement the activities were there, as well as the groups of students that would be served by the activities. The plan also included resources needed in addition to the attending short-, medium-, and long-term impact and outcomes. It is a credible plan.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Although the achievement goals are not overly ambitious, they do appear to be achievable as they afford slow but steady progress.

The proposal set forth annual achievement goals for each grade band and discipline. Corresponding annual assessments plus end of course, summative assessments were indicated.

Plans for decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment were provided. There is no explanation of how the numbers in future years were forecasted. Also, in this section, no systematic plan was explicated about tracking college enrollment as if it would be self-reported. Later in C1, the proposal mentioned that schools would be provided the funds to use of the National Student Clearing House for tracking enrollment and college completion. This is confusing. It is unclear if this automatic or if districts could use this system if they so desire. This could become problematic with regards to accuracy and consistency of data throughout consortium.

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 consortium was able to boast about several accomplishments that speak to their record of success thus far and their potential for closing the achievement gap. Such kudos include:

- Some districts experienced consistent gains in all academic areas.
- Other districts made improvements in math.
- Still other districts experienced increased achievement in language arts.
- Yet other districts increased their college enrollment numbers.
- Certain districts increased their grade in the state based, A-F accountability model.
- Particular districts received outstanding achievement awards.
- Then selected districts earned academic improvement awards.

There was no mention of specific reforms for persistently low achieving schools but the application suggests that all schools and grades will be served.

All the same, it appears that the common denominator of aspiring toward greater, consistent achievement is the thread that runs through this consortium of districts.

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

The consortium practices transparency in that all schools/districts meet all federal and state requirements for reporting annual salaries of their certified employees and that administrative salaries are also a matter of public record.

Although awkwardly worded, I believe the narrative reads that the salaries of administrative, instructional staff, and teachers are posted on respective school websites and that a governance board is in place to ensure continued compliance.

While the consortium pledges to follow all financial procedures for employment, contracts, and procurement, the proposal did not attest to the transparency and reporting of non-personnel expenditures at the school level.

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

10

8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has made provisions for autonomy through local project coordination with the necessary support and general administrative oversight at the consortium level. Districts within the consortium have implemented a garden variety of reform measures that are academic (i.e. consistent curriculum across a district), operational (i.e. teacher collaboration period), and personnel (i.e. hiring of new superintendent) and other initiatives that are paying dividends.

Each school's budget is approved by the state to ensure school-level implementation. The consortium has also pledged state compliance with state statutes and federal law.

The autonomy of the consortium is further substantiated through the freedom of personnel decisions and choices in using resources based on each school's needs.

The proposal stated that such autonomy would be advantageous for personalized learning strategies such as vertical and horizontal communication among teachers to ensure that developmentally appropriate and individualized services were provided for students throughout their lifespan in K-12 schools.

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

10

6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The participating districts used a variety of ways to solicit community feedback. Some school districts engaged community groups, businesses, parent organizations, universities, and teachers in the planning process. There was no mention that students were surveyed about this initiative.

Feedback was given regarding achievement gaps and those with the highest needs.

Teachers' unions are uniquely interested in fair and objective evaluation plans for teachers and are in support of highly effective teachers.

Career and technical education, education cooperative, community education agency, local manufacturing company, representatives of various PTAs, parent networks and associations, a kindergarten teacher, and the various LEAs in the consortium offered letters of support.

Union representatives signed the paperwork but did not submit a letter of support.

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

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

All of the schools document an achievement gap between low socio economic students and the general population. Even larger preparation gaps are present between special needs populations and the general population. There is also some evidence of a performance gap between English language learners and Caucasian students.

To combat such gaps, teachers will increase their competency for facilitating personalizing learning experiences and will engage in professional learning communities. The plan also calls for students to develop internal assets through as their learning engagement increases.

At this juncture, good intentions have been expressed but they are without specific, measureable outcomes, and time lines. With gaps in so many areas, the plan must be quite targeted for success.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium's plan for improving learning and teaching and personalizing the learning environment for college- and career-ready graduates is as follows:

Learning and development linked to college- and career-ready standards:

- The districts hold high expectations for students in that Common core standards in addition to other performance standards will be the guides for teaching and learning and for measuring academic success.

Involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest:

- Students will be surveyed to explore their interests and passions so that they will learn the value of goal formulation for their own bright futures.
- Students will work with a Graduation Coach who will help each student map out his/her personalized academic course of action and monitor their progress.

Master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving:

- The leadership skills that students will develop include conflict management, team building, communication, problem solving, decision making, and resilience.
- One-on-one mentor coaches will be trained to provide guidance on key leadership skills including study skills, decision-making, and responsibility and accountability.
- Caring adults will model these skills and while deepening educator-student engagement.

A personalized learning and a sequence of instructional content and skill development:

- Before and after-school tutoring will both serve as strategies to individual instruction for the purposes of making a significant reduction in the achievement gap and better preparing them for college- and career readiness.

Parental support:

- The Parent Engagement Framework will be employed to provide a model for systemic change in family, community, and school relationships for the intent of improving student success and achievement that leads to college and career readiness.
- The Family Enrichment Coordinator will work with the teachers in identifying families to target for additional assistance.
- Schools will be able to apply for grant money (from the consortium) to set up fully functional family enrichment centers.

A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments:

- Formal instruction will be centered on the academic standards of the Common Core.
- Teachers will provide differentiated instruction based on the learner needs of students.
- Beginning in 2014, a new assessment, PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) that aligns with college and workforce expectations will begin.
- The End of Course Assessment will measure competency in Algebra I and English 10 which further dictates high-quality instruction.
- Students must pass the PARCC and EOC exam to be on track for high school graduation again calling for high-quality instruction.

High-quality content, including digital learning and individual student data that can be used to determine progress:

- Students will learn how to manage and share their own achievement data.
- They will eventually be responsible for analyzing their achievement and monitoring their improvements.

Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students:

- Beginning in elementary school students will select peer helpers and peer and adult mentors.
- Students will have access to substance abuse prevention as well as bully prevention information.
- Along with academic performance measures, social and emotional supports will help students in identifying and cultivating their passions and interests as they prepare for future beyond high school.
- All of the above measures would help students to stand against distractions that could otherwise derail them.

Understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals;

- Beginning early in their educational careers, students will be responsible for their own learning. This will be accomplished with the data dashboards that allow students to see their progress and monitor their improvements.

Weaknesses or items not addressed here are:

- Access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.
- Mechanisms in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

- Ongoing feedback.
- How students will learn to manage, analyze their achievement data, and monitor their improvements.
- Although sound strategies were put forth, all of the elements of a high-quality plan were not in place.

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

20

10

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Several strategies were reiterated in this section but did not necessarily speak to the criteria. Teaching and leading are evidenced as follows:

Personalizing the learning environment to Processes and tools to match student need:

- Teachers will personalize instruction and make learning meaningful and connected to life.

Improving learning and teaching/ instructional strategies from highly effective teachers/high quality learning resources:

- The grant will afford the consortium a total of 33 instructional coaches to model and share expertise and encouragement among the districts.
- Pay for substitute teachers is written into the grant so that teachers can get external training as needed.

Improve instruction and increase capacity to support student progress:

- Teachers will learn how to analyze data as it relates to student achievement and translate that into specific lesson plans and teaching strategies.
- Teachers will use rubrics of competencies that are flexible and adaptable in order to customize their activities to increase effectiveness.

Accelerate learning through support:

- Professional learning communities will be in place to foster collaboration and communication on behalf of student success.
- Class schedules will be adjusted to protect the time for professional learning communities to meet.
- There will be teaching teams for on-going professional development learning communities.

Frequently measure student progress:

- With integrated student data management systems, teachers can receive timely feedback from documented observations that are then linked back to student performance.

Teacher evaluation and teacher feedback:

- The state's teacher evaluation model, RISE, will provide tangible, relevant, and pragmatic feedback to teachers. It will be fully implemented among consortium districts and continuous improvement is expected.
- The model focuses on Planning, Instruction, Leadership, and Core Professionalism.

Weaknesses:

- Much information was provided on what students will learn and be able to do but without a connection to how teachers would get them there.
- There is insufficient focus on the role that building level leaders plays in the overall plans for success.
- Although sound strategies were put forth, all of the elements of a high-quality plan were not in place.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	5
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Primarily, the high quality plan is outlined in the Project Hope section. The LEA demonstrated infrastructure supports for personalized learning as follows:</p> <p>Organizing the LEA central office, or the consortium governance structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consortium maintains a governing board that meets regularly to hear review progress reports, to make necessary adjustments, and to ensure implementation and accountability. <p>Providing school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districts are reviewing and altering their schedules to allow for implementation of ideas represented in this proposal. • Leadership teams and professional learning communities will have the autonomy to implement best practices based on the needs of students. <p>Providing learning resources and instructional practices for students with disabilities and English learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district aspires is to be in compliance with the letter and spirit of all state and federal regulations regarding special needs populations and English language learners through greater levels of differentiated instruction. <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organizational chart of central office is not presented here. • The plan for students to progress with mastery and earn credit is not provided. • Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery is not mentioned here. 		

- Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways is not mentioned here.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section was omitted. Primarily, the high quality plan is outlined in the Project Hope section. All other information for these criteria were gathered from other parts of the proposal.

Ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal;

- Data systems that maintain general student records are in the process of being integrated with achievement data and teacher observations to provide for easier correlation between teacher performance and student achievement.
- Student performance data is accessible online to parents.

Using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format:

- Data systems that maintain general student records are in the process of being integrated with achievement data so that teachers, students, and parents may use them as needed.

Ensuring that LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems:

- The use of technology for student information data and instructional improvement system data have been touched upon in other areas.

Weaknesses:

- There is no mention of ensuring that high-needs/low income children and parents or the community will have access to technology for the purposes of student achievement progress.
- There is not much mention of ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support.
- Not much is stated in the application about the use of technology for human resources data or budget data although it could be presumed in the 21st century.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium will employ independent evaluators to provide them feedback on the effectiveness of this entire plan. The rubric of their evaluation is provided and could lead to meaningful conversations about their progress.

The Evaluation Questions Grid is a fairly comprehensive means of continuously assessing improvement. Besides, Teachers will meet regularly to receive regular feedback toward achieving their professional development goals as well as evaluative feedback on student performance assessments. The use of technology will afford teachers information much more quickly than in the past in order to make necessary instructional adjustments. Low socio economic students and

special needs students are sorted into subgroups for performance measures so that their needs are kept at the forefront of initiatives.

The role of the building leaders in continuous improvement is not expressly stated.

With regards to publicly sharing information about the quality of their investments, the Project Director will put in place measures to examine and increase communications for greater public awareness.

There are no timelines associated with the plan.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 Schools will use electronic means and printed materials to communicate with parents. The plan does not mention how the districts will reach out to highly transient parents and other families that experience financial instability or the community at large.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 Approximately ten performance measures were presented here by subgroup. Some measures seem repetitive such as “graduates” versus “diplomas”. All the same, the minimum of 12 was not present.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 The Evaluation Questions Grid which was presented and evaluated in E1 spoke to continuous improvement and is a fairly comprehensive means of assessing it.

 While a solid plan, all factors of a high quality plan are not all present – goals, timelines, deliverables, etc.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:
 The budget seems reasonable and sufficient. Very detailed budgets with references to other areas of the proposal were provided. Also, budget summaries for various initiatives, supplies, training, projects, and technology, etc. were provided. The budget clearly provided a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities. For example, key positions, their responsibilities, and their significance to the grant were outlined, in great detail. No external foundation support, LEA, State, or other Federal funds are expected. Minimum equipment purchases are anticipated.

But beyond the mention of equipment having a multi-year life, long-term sustainability was not mentioned.

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

10

6

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Instructional Coaches will be decreased as the grant nears its end. If the faculty still needs them, this may affect success. This may also have an impact on the type of individual that may accept the position, knowing that the position may fade away. There was no mention of state and local government financial support or a high quality plan for sustainability.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

Available

Score

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

10

0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The reviewer did not see an explanation for Competitive Preference Priority.

Absolute Priority 1

Available

Score

Absolute Priority 1

**Met/Not
Met**

Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The plan proposes quite a few honorable ambitions.

This consortium of districts sincerely aspires for children to value and embrace a culture of education. Efforts such as the Parent Engagement Framework support that.

The consortium wants to engage children in learning and expose students to new learning opportunities that will tap into their dreams and passions for meaningful employment beyond high school and college. It seeks to empower students to make decisions about their own education. It provides for this through teacher support and through technology they will learn to manage their own academic data.

The consortium envisions well-adjusted, well-adapted, and well-equipped children and youth and provides for social-emotional support through individual mentors and by adopting a nationally recognized program. With the support of parents and teachers, mentors, family enrichment coordinators, and other caring adults, students will experience the support and services they need to stay engaged in school and in internships in the community.

The consortium calls for effective teachers and provides collaboration through professional learning communities and instructional coaches. Teachers are likely need quite a bit more training than proposed. Even training in functional teaming is important. The assessments that would be administered appeared well thought out but not a curriculum and instructional plan to ensure alignment and standards based teaching and learning.

It is easy to see the earnest intent of this consortium. The primary weakness of the proposal is the lack of a high quality plans throughout the proposal to implement the many goals. The logic model houses the prevailing plan. With the organizational complexities of a consortium, lacking high quality plans throughout makes the proposal less likely to be successful in the life of the grant. With a consortium board, there is more promise for the application but also because this is a consortium of many districts that have struggled with success, implementation without a rigid plan may be a set up for failure.

It is easy to see the earnest intent of this consortium. The primary weakness of the proposal is the lack of a high quality plans throughout the proposal to implement the many goals. The logic model houses the prevailing plan. With the organizational complexities of a consortium, lacking high quality plans throughout makes the proposal less likely to be successful in the life of the grant. With a consortium board, there is more promise for the application but also because this is a consortium of many districts that have struggled with success, implementation without a rigid plan may be a set up for failure.

Moreover, a few key components of the application were simply left out or overlooked, were out of order (i.e. not addressed in requested section), or the headings were not consistent with the application's titles.

Total	210	123
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0273IN-2 for Southwest Dubois County School Corporation LEA for Southern Indiana Education Center

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: The SEIC Consortium envisions students who are engaged in learning and empowered to make decisions over their own education...youth are well-adjusted, well-equipped to navigate their education despite the challenges they may face at home or in their communities. Approaches discussed and diagrammed for pursuing the vision are coherent and comprehensive (empower students by having them set their own goals and manage their academic progress, professional development/training and resources for teachers, engaging parents to maximally love and support their children). The extent to which the reform vision builds on its work in RTTD's four core educational assurance areas becomes partially evident in subsequent sections of the proposal. (Additional details regarding approaches are provided in notes below.) SCORE: H (8)		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: The proposal states that "All grades within the 11 districts will participate. While the focus will begin with intermediate/jr high students and then carried into high school, it is understood that foundational work through the elementary schools must take place in order for success to be possible."		

The consortium's application lists and details all participating LEAs, schools, and their demographic characteristics.

(a) While not described in the narrative, supporting letters indicate that a consortium of LEAs that work with the Southern Indiana Education Center convened to develop an RTTD application. All schools in each participating LEA would participate in the initiative.

(b) the proposal lists all participating schools;

(c) All 18,606 students in the consortium's schools (45 schools mentioned in narrative; 42 are listed) will participate in the project. Over half these students are from low-income families. An estimated 46% of the students in participating schools are classified as high-need; 100% of high need students would participate in the initiative. 1,238 teachers will participate in the project.

SCORE: H (8)

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

10

6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative does not discuss the issue of scale-up. However, from the onset the proposed initiative would be implemented district-wide in each of the participating LEAs.

SCORE: M (6)

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

10

2

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Numerical goals for summative assessments are reasonably ambitious and achievable. For example, at all but one listed school), over half of the students taking the 7th Grade English/Language Arts and Math ISTEP+ scored Proficient. Target increase in % proficient varies from - 1, 2, 3, or 4 percentage points per year, apparently inversely related to baseline performance.

At least half the students taking the 8th Grade English/Language Arts and Math ISTEP+ scored Proficient. The targeted increase in % proficient varies among schools - 2 or 3 percentage points per year.

For 10 of the listed 12 schools, over half the students taking the Algebra 1 and English 10 ECA scored Proficient. Targeted increase in % proficient is typically set at 2 percentage points per year. For the 2 schools whose baseline falls below 50% proficient, the target increases are 3 and 4 percentage points per year, respectively.

(b) Goals have been set for only two of the five subgroups known to experience significant achievement gaps in the consortium: low-income and special education students. What about data for other subgroups (e.g., Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, and Multiracial, limited-English proficient)? At minimum, proposal should explain why no goals are set for these other subgroups listed in ESEA. While the narrative for the "vision" section of the proposal notes that the achievement gap will be addressed for Hispanic/Latino students, no goals are set for this subgroup.

In setting achievement gap goals for low-income students, the goal is to reduce the percentage non-pass rate of low-income students on summative assessments by about 1 percentage point per year. Given that the consortium has an overall goal of increasing percent of students scoring proficient on ISTEP by 2 or more percentage points annually (see Table (A)(2)), an implication of the achievement gap target is that the achievement gap would probably widen if all the consortium's numerical goals were achieved. Similarly, the achievement gap goals set for special education students numerically would not help to close the achievement gap.

(c) Graduation rates are generally high for the consortium's high schools. Goals are reasonable --the lower the baseline graduation rate, the higher the annual growth targets.

(d) Note that baseline college enrollment rates are self-reported (by students?). The validity/reliability of the reported rates is not clear. The targeted growth rates vary by school; the targets (goals) seem too low for some schools (e.g., North Gibson-Four Year University).

SCORE: L (2)

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>The narrative provides background on the track records of each of the districts in the consortium. While the individual LEA successes are laudable, the stories were not integrated into the proposal's theory of change. For example, the stories did not describe what the LEAs have done or are currently doing to personalize instruction and empower individual students.</p> <p>SCORE: M (5)</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Narrative states that "All schools/districts meet all federal and state requirements for reporting annual salaries of their certified employees; they are a matter of public record. Administrative salaries are posted on school websites, instructional staff and teacher salaries and approved by the school board during a public school board meeting." It is difficult to tell from this statement whether each LEA makes public (by school) the expenditure data required by RTTD.</p> <p>SCORE: M (3)</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Narrative does not directly describe whether the consortium and its LEAs and schools will enjoy conditions and sufficient autonomy under State laws and requirements to fully implement the proposed initiative. Of relevance, however, LEAs have control over personnel selection and resource utilization in accord with LEA board policies. Moreover, all participating LEAs have opted to adopt the state of Indiana's new teacher evaluation system, RISE. RISE meets the definition of RTTD.</p> <p>SCORE: M (5)</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Overall, letters of support and buy-in by teachers unions evidence strong support from teachers, parents, district administrators, and community members. The development of the proposal benefited from discussions with teachers. It's not evident that input was systematically solicited from parents or students.</p> <p>SCORE: H (8)</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal provides an analysis of selected achievement gaps for all LEAs in the consortium.</p> <p>The narrative lists the needs and gaps reported by LEAs. These needs and gaps varied by LEAs and schools that make up the consortium. Identified challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large population of low-income students, 		

- growing population of Latinos/Hispanics,
- teacher effectiveness ratings did not reflect student achievement,
- limited teacher collaboration time,
- lack of a student-centered common curriculum,
- high levels of student substance abuse,
- low student engagement,
- high levels of family conflict, and
- high achievement gaps.

The proposal addresses to some degree most of these identified needs/gaps.

The proposal does not describe a specific plan for analyzing the consortium’s current status in implementing personalized learning environments and/or the proposed school reform approach.

SCORE: M (3)

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Schools would implement several strategies for improving the personalization of students’ education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiated instruction • Students take responsibility for planning their educational goals, self-monitoring their progress, and sharing their progress data with their teachers and parents. (What equipment/tools will be available to aid students carry out this function?) • Opportunities to develop leadership skills (peer helpers and peer mentors) • Support from (33) Graduation Coaches (will help students develop personalized academic plans and will frequently monitor each student’s progress on his/her plan). • Access to one-on-one mentor coaches (relies on volunteers) • Tutoring (especially for low-achieving students) (provided by whom?) • Track students to college (enrollment thru completion) through the National Student Clearing House <p>Other strategies featured in the proposal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of Common Core standards and PARCC assessment. • Family assistance (through Family Enrichment Coordinators) • Family engagement (Family Engagement Framework) • Anti-bullying and substance abuse prevention • Family Enrichment Centers (mini-grants) <p>SCORE: H (15)</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>33 instructional coaches would be hired to support teachers on-site professional development needs. “Instructional coaches will model and provide leadership training on how to assess personal professional development needs, conduct data-driven meetings, decisionmaking, and corresponding activities as they relate to instructional strategies.” Instructional coaches will also provide training on differentiated instruction.</p>		

LEAs will implement the Indiana teacher evaluation system, RISE. "RISE will assist principals in how to recognize and support highly effective and effective teachers, recognizing their effectiveness and providing actionable feedback."

SEIC's professional development portal will provide teachers instant access to high-level, cutting-edge on-line professional development.

It's not clear whether Graduation Mentor Coaches would train classroom teachers on how to support implementation of the personalized education model reflected in this proposal.

It's not clear whether or how Graduation Mentor Coaches, volunteer mentors, Instructional Coaches, and Family enrichment coordinators, and teachers would work together to optimize the implementation of the consortium's personalized learning vision/plan.

SCORE: H (15)

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The consortium will meet regularly. Each participating LEA will be represented on the consortium's governing body. b. School leadership teams will be "flexible and autonomous"; schools are currently reviewing their schedules to determine if modifications are needed. c. and (d) While the proposal indicates that "Student progress will be designed on student ability and mastery, not on the amount of time spent," it was not clear how consortium LEAs and schools would implement this idea. <p>(e) application states that "All students will have full access to classroom instruction regardless of their learning challenges." However, the narrative does not describe how this will happen.</p> <p>SCORE: M (10)</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Student performance data are available on-line for parents. However, it's not clear whether parents will have ready access to these data. b. As described in other sections of the proposal, students will have access to a variety of supports -- peer leaders, volunteer mentors, Graduation Mentor Coaches. Likewise, as needed, parents/families will receive support from Family Enrichment Coordinators. c. Not clear from narrative that parents and students will be able to export their information in an open data format and use student data in other electronic formats. d. The proposal calls for the expenditure of \$260K to develop a "robust data system which will house a student data system as well as create and integrate an electronic teacher and administrator evaluation data system." Aside from this, the proposal does not describe a plan for ensuring that LEAs and schools use interoperable data (as defined by RTTD). <p>SCORE: M (4)</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will undergo a continuous improvement process through their maintenance of personalized data notebooks and their review of their progress with teachers, parents, Graduation Coaches, and volunteer mentors. • Parents will be integrated into the student improvement process. Moreover, as applicable, parents and families will receive continual support from family support coordinators. • Teachers will engage in on-going improvement through their professional learning communities and review of their teacher evaluation (RISE) data. • The external evaluator will seek answers to questions regarding the key components of the initiative (Evaluation Questions Grid) and provide feedback to stakeholders periodically designed to promote ongoing adjustments/improvements. <p>SCORE: H (12)</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual evaluation report will be shared with stakeholders. • Every 6 weeks, the external evaluator would develop a report on some aspect of the evaluation and distribute it to the project manager and SEIC. It is not clear whether or how the project manager and/or SEIC would communicate this information to internal stakeholders or the public. <p>SCORE: M (3)</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Only a fraction of RTTD's required performance measures are presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual goals are presented for percent "highly effective" and "effective" teachers and principals. However, given that none of the participating schools have baseline data on the number and percentage of "highly effective" and "effective" teachers or principals, it is notable that the goals for percent of highly effective teachers vary widely among participating schools - from 5% to 90%. Some schools' goals seem too high and some seem too low. • Goals have been set for # (or %) of low-income and special education students (and in a few cases Hispanic/Latino students) with highly effective and effective teachers. In general, the goals set by LEAs imply a desire to insure primarily that low-income and special education students have equal access to highly effective and effective teachers. It's not clear why LEAs did not set goals for other subgroups (e.g., other ethnic groups and English learners) • Application does not include at least one measure than can be directly tied to improving student outcomes. • Application does not include any goals for grades K-3. • Application's grades 4-8 goals set for some subgroups for # and % of students on track to college and career readiness (based on 7th and 8th graders' passage of both the English language arts and math portions of ISTEP+). In general, goals are targeted to increase by about 2 percentage points per year. This is reasonable. Only one of the consortium's schools proposed a health or social-emotional leading indicator (i.e., alcohol use). • 9-12 grade goal set for # and % of student completing and submitting applications for Federal Student Aid. Goals seem reasonable. • Application's grades 9-12 goals set for # and % of students on track to college and career readiness (based on students who have passed both the Algebra 1 and English 10 End-of-course tests after their sophomore year. However, goals are not set for subgroups. Available goals seem reasonable. 		

- Application adds one additional 9-12 indicator of students being on track for college- and career-readiness -- # of graduating students. However, goals were not developed for subgroups stipulated by RTTD.
- One school set a behavioral goal for grades 9-12 – rate of monthly alcohol use.

SCORE: LOW (1)

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the project is practical. An external evaluator has been identified for the project. The evaluator has created an Evaluations Questions Grid that lists key evaluation questions that align well with the components of the school reform plan. The Grid also lists corresponding (implementation or process) indicators, data sources, and performance indicators. The evaluator would provide feedback to stakeholders periodically (every 6 weeks) designed to promote ongoing adjustments/ improvements. The evaluation questions and procedures would be adjusted over time based on project experience.

SCORE: H (5)

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Overall budget summary includes only RTTD funds (nearly \$30 million). Over half the RTTD funds would cover personnel compensation costs. Most of the balance of the RTTD funds would be devoted to contractual costs and teacher stipends.

Project-level budget summaries and extensive narrative are provided. The narrative provides thoughtful rationales for the each of the specified projects (aligned with the proposal narrative). A challenge with the budget is that the projects resemble line items, and it appears the two are blended.

SCORE: M (6)

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

10

3

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The current sustainability plan has two parts:

- Eliminate Instructional Coach positions at the end of the third year, with the rationale that by this time teachers would be fully empowered to provide support needed for additional professional development.
- During the fourth year of the project, initiate internal discussions on how to sustain other key project components.

Thus, the project, if funded, would begin operations with considerable uncertainty regarding how to sustain some of its key elements.

SCORE: M (3)

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Competitive Preference Priority is not directly covered in the proposal.

SCORE: 0

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Building on the core educational assurance areas of RTTD, the consortium’s LEAs and schools would implement several strategies for improving the personalization of students’ education and thereby improving educational outcomes. These include differentiated instruction, students taking responsibility for planning and monitoring their educational goals, expanded opportunities to develop leadership skills (peer helpers and peer mentors), support from Graduation Coaches (help students develop personalized academic plans and monitor each student’s progress on his/her plan), access to one-on-one mentors, and access to tutoring support as needed, and tracking. Discussion of these strategies and related support resonate throughout the proposal.

Total	210	122
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Not Applicable.

SCORE: 0



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0273IN-3 for Southwest Dubois County School Corporation LEA for Southern Indiana Education Center

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant states a variety of goals and visions for what students, families, teachers and community partners will be able to experience through their implementation plan.
- There is no evidence of past work from the consortium members that identifies what work they are building upon as tied to the four core educational assurance areas.
- The applicant has intentionally decided to begin with middle school students, based on research and evidence from one district about developmental disconnects that begin in the 7th grade.
- Applicant has a large amount of wellness activities (bullying prevention, peer tutoring, substance abuse training) embedded as part of their academic and family engagement work.
- The vision is strong, but the approaches are unclear.

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

- Applicant did not list a process they used to select schools. It looks like 100% of the consortium schools are selected, and 100% of the students within the schools, however there is no narrative to support this assumption.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant did not provide a narrative for this section. With 100% of the students and schools being involved in the plan, it appears that scale up is a non-issue. However, there is no narrative to support this assumption.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant LEAs have not shown that they are paying particular attention to achievement gap data. The data presented was difficult to discern any understanding from because of the way the data was presented. It appears that the consortium has determined that they will in fact decrease the achievement gap, but the percentage is quite small - in most cases less than 10% over the four years of the grant.
- There was little to no achievement gap data available for high school graduation rates, as well as for the college enrollment rates.
- There was very little narrative to provide any insight into how the applicant sees their implementation plan supporting these data goals.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	9

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- As a consortium, there is some evidence of improving student learning outcomes/graduation rates/college enrollments. Not all LEAs in the consortium have evidence in each area, but the majority have some evidence in at least one area
- There was no discussion of how student performance data is made available to students or parents as a way to inform and improve participation/instruction. There was some discussion about teacher professional practices that are being utilized to help teachers collaborate, yet no discussion about student performance data.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was no discussion about achievement gap and increasing equity in learning and teaching. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant states that personnel salaries are available via websites, and expenditures are approved at the board level. There was no discussion about the availability of actual school-level information. 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All consortium members have sufficient autonomy to implement their proposal. 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant states that feedback was solicited from various stakeholders, but there is little information about how this happened and how the proposal was revised based on feedback. The LEAs with collective bargaining representation have signed the grant application in support, but there is no narrative describing how the engagement happened with the representation or the teachers in participating schools. Applicant states that key stake holders including parents and community members were asked to provide feedback. there is little information about how this happened, there are letters of support from various stakeholders. 		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is insufficient evidence that the LEAs have analyzed their current learning environments based on their implementation plan. The narrative describes increasing numbers of students in poverty, and a recognized achievement gap. However, this narrative is not continued into a discussion about how new implementation plan will address identified needs. 		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>Applicant has identified several methods for helping students have a more personalized learning environment including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development for teachers to assist them in learning how to differentiate instruction and to utilize their PLCs for additional teacher training. Building in a leadership skill development process for students through peer tutoring and peer mentoring program. Adding additional support time for students including before and after school tutoring and building in a one-on-on mentor program. Focusing on wellness issues for students that often inhibit academic success 		

Applicant indicates that beginning in 5th grade, students will create an academic plan with support from a graduation coach.

While the applicant has indicated some new strategies, there does not appear to be a clear and concise plan for how learning will look different for students and staff. There is insufficient evidence to determine how students will become partners in their personalized learning plans and how they will identify academic gaps; there is insufficient evidence to understand how learning goals will be linked to college and career ready standards and how teachers will understand these standards and how they are tied student goals; there is insufficient evidence about learning experiences that students will take part in; there is insufficient evidence about how the instructional approaches and environments will be modified for individual students.

There is no mention about accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students.

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

20

5

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has identified a variety of new professional development strategies to support teachers including:

- Implementation of data notebooks for each student that are maintained by students with assistance from teachers
- 33 new instructional coaches will be added to help support enhanced professional development
- Consortium members will utilize the RISE teacher evaluation model implemented by the state of Indiana that will provide on-going feedback about teachers' practice and effectiveness
- Professional development will include attention to data

The narrative is unclear in how the new instructional coaches and professional development will be utilized for personalized learning environments. There is no mention about how teachers will be trained to adapt content and instruction, or how teachers will develop curriculum tied to students individual academic needs, interests and optimal learning approaches.

Applicant discusses the implementation of Graduation coaches beginning in the 5th grade, who will support the development of the individual plans for students, and will assist with monitoring. It is unclear how often these coaches will meet with students, or how they will be involved with the teacher teams to insure clear communication for students.

There is minimal evidence about how educators will access tools, data and resources to accelerate student progress. The mention of data notebooks and focus on data during professional development is insufficient to fully understand how the applicant intends to support educators in this process.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant has developed a consortium governance system for decision-making and financial management.

Individual LEA's will determine necessary schedule changes.

There is no discussion about how personnel decisions and staffing models will be determined at the school level, and the level of autonomy is unclear.

Applicant states that students will be able to progress based on mastery through differentiated instructional strategies, however, there is no clear plan about how this will happen.

There is no evidence that students will be able to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and in multiple ways.

There is no discussion about learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student performance data is accessible to students and parents online. • Applicant states that data systems that maintain student records are being integrated with assessment data. It is unclear if this is for all LEAs or if they are creating a new system, or building off a state system. • There is no discussion about how stakeholders will receive technical support with the new learning plan implementation. • There is no discussion about how stakeholders will have access to resources in support of the implementation. 		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant will be utilizing the services of an outside evaluator with a plan for regular evaluation and communication with the consortium. • Consortium members will meet regularly to discuss progress • Teachers within LEAs will meet regularly in the PLC groups to review feedback from standardized tests and other feedback from implementation. • The Project Director will be primarily responsible for communication with stakeholders and public entities. 		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: Applicant has varied communication methods including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating with parents via printed and electronic means. • LEAs are enhancing data systems to assist with communication - integrating existing systems. • The Project Director will be responsible for overseeing consortium communication. • Newly hired family enrichment coordinators will be tasked with supporting parent and family communication and reach out 		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has identified goals for performance measures and intend to use a combination of existing standardized testing data; existing substance abuse survey data; as well as a newly hired external evaluator to document and provide feedback on the implementation. • Many of the LEAs do not have baseline data by subgroup. They have set goals for subgroups. There is insufficient data to determine if these goals are ambitious or at all possible. There is insufficient evidence to determine if the LEAs are paying close attention to their subgroups and focusing on closing achievement gaps for these subgroups. • Applicant has health/wellness indicators in their implementation plan, as well as FAFSA completion in addition to the other standardized test indicators for college and career readiness. 		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has indicated that an external evaluator will support the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Race to the top District funded activities. The evaluator has determined guiding questions, indicators to be tracked, data to be collected and performance indicators. Each of the sections of the external evaluator designed rubric address the Race to the Top District funded activities including professional development and new strategies for working with students and families.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has provided a thorough description of all allocated funds and how they will be utilized. • Applicant has identified which funds will be used for one-time investments and which will be used for ongoing costs. • There is insufficient information to determine applicants intention for beyond the grant period. • The administration/participation/oversight line-item is being estimated at \$1.5 million. There is insufficient narrative describing how this money is being utilized to support the full implementation. The money is being allocated for the LEA providing oversight, but it is unclear what the consortium is getting from the LEA for the money being allocated. 		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant does not have a high-quality plan for sustainability. In the narrative, the applicant describes the need to evaluate the need for the hired coaches and new personnel during year three & four of the grant, but does not have a plan in place to sustain the new hires. The narrative does describe the applicants hope that some of the work being done by the newly hired staff will be learned by existing school personnel, but it is unclear how this will be sustained beyond the term of the grant. • The applicant has not identified any additional funding sources should they need to continue to support various aspects of the implementation. • The newly designed Learning Portal is estimated at \$160K/year, but it is unclear if this is an ongoing cost beyond the term of the grant, and if so, there is no plan in place for sustaining this cost. 		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant did not complete any narrative for the competitive preference priority.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant has identified strategies that are aligned to the four core educational assurance areas, however, the plan is not coherent and comprehensive.
- There is unclear evidence that the instructional practices will change to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization strategies.
- Applicant has clearly identified the college and career ready standards, data and professional development practices that they will implement, however, they have not demonstrated a comprehensive plan linking these to changing existing learning environments and develop new teaching and learning practices for students.
- Applicant has also provided insufficient evidence of their plan to address achievement gaps across student groups. They have intention to decrease gaps, but lack evidence and narrative about how they are planning specifically to decrease these gaps and increase graduation rates for subgroups.

Total	210	103
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