



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0711MN-1 for Windom Area School District - 0177

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Evidence is presented to clearly justify the proposed activities that are built upon current collaboration between six districts. The proposal documents the successful implementation of PLCs for staff across the consortium which is a strength. A unified school calendar between the participating schools indicates a strong comprehensive collaboration.</p> <p>The proposal is strong in its recognition that time is needed to expand teacher collaboration opportunities. A plan to send local educators to visit successful sites is innovative and appropriate. The role of the principal in training and in leading school reform is noted.</p> <p>The foundation is in place to accelerate learning through building upon current data reviews and collaborative time for teachers to share strategies. The involvement of teachers in providing staff development to their peers is evidence that there is an acknowledgment of current teacher strengths to share and build upon.</p> <p>It is unclear why the professional development in personalized learning is not to be implemented until year 3.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Cross district collaboration to be held across the rural area of the consortium district is a creative approach to strengthen collaboration. This strategy is a strong support for the proposed number of participants and all district teachers involved in the consortium. The proposal includes substantial information regarding the history of the collaboration across the districts and the importance of the PLCs in determining student services and strategies for instruction.</p> <p>Students are identified to participate based on low-income and high needs. High needs factors or the process used to identify high needs students is not clear.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>District-wide change is strengthened in the project's proposal to link all teachers across the consortium in PLC work which includes data analysis, lesson planning, sharing successful strategies. A plan to create laboratory classrooms indicates the applicant's willingness to explore new models and to maintain those models to scale up the program services. Linking students with opportunities to obtain college credit for internships with local businesses and community groups extends their opportunity for access and interest in higher education. Attending conferences nationally will provide teachers with greater access to successful strategies as well as allow them to share their initiatives.</p> <p>The consortium has developed a high quality plan by building upon local strengths in connections with the community, providing ample time and opportunity for teacher engagement in the model, and identifying the development of laboratory schools to continue to evaluate and modify services that will directly impact classrooms and students.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The vision of a grass roots effort to connect rural districts to one another, based upon current collaborations, is strong evidence that this proposal will affect student learning.</p>		

Clear data is presented that supports the reasonable and achievable goals outlined in the proposal to increase achievement roughly 2% per year. This is an achievable goal however it does not indicate acceleration of learning. Specifically, one school reports only 20% of ELL students are at proficient levels in secondary reading. The end of the grant term goal for these students is 30%, which seems to be insufficient growth to prepare this group of students for high school. The district identified need is to use assessments previously developed and build upon those by continuing to develop formative assessments that will guide instruction. It would be important to focus on this sub group's current instruction and needs for modification to increase equity in their educational opportunity.

The strategy to support all students involves personalized portfolios and individualized plans. The involvement of teachers and principals in professional development for individualization is an ambitious and appropriate goal to affect the education of all children in the consortium districts. It is not clear why the personalization professional development is to be implemented in year three.

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
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The districts involved share a consistent approach by using key concepts, and PLC structures to pool resources and provide support to all teachers. Implementing successful PLCs across a consortium is evidence of an ambitious reform that is currently in place. Across the consortium districts use a variety of resources in pre-school programs is and yet all have shown improvement in oral reading fluency. This is an example of data provided to demonstrate the impact of current programs on preschool instruction.</p> <p>RTI is implemented as a consistent approach to problem solving and is an ambitious reform as it was implemented across a six-district consortium. Support for the impact of RTI is indicated through evidence of increasing achievement for special education and free/reduced lunch subgroups.</p> <p>The consortium provides further evidence of their collaborative approach by presenting information regarding one career center that serves students from all of the districts involved with career exploration projects.</p> <p>One site has made dramatic achievement in special education reading scores yet there is no indication that what is working in that site has been identified and will be built upon.</p> <p>The strength of the extent of success in implementing programs within this consortium lies in the collaborative approach across six districts to combine resources to serve all students.</p> <p>Ads in the paper, published reports, and online access to data in some sites are presented. There is no evidence of non-literary means of connecting with parents (home visits, face to face conferences to share data, forums, etc.) who may not have the skills to access the report data. The proposal states the information is available if the district office is contacted. This puts the burden of data availability on the family and limits their access to informed participation.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Annual audits are available and presented at a regular board meeting for each district involved. Websites publish audit information. This is a limited approach that does not account for access in additional public forums to support a high level of transparency. It is not clearly evident that personnel and non-personnel expenditures are identified and available to the public. The proposal directs the public to the business office of each of the consortium's districts for this information, which places the burden on the public to access it rather than on the consortium to provide it, and limits transparency.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The proposal indicates that state statutes support the activities and allow districts to employ flexibility in planning programs. It is a strength that the districts received state funding support to revise and upgrade technology. Personalized programs using iPads were piloted with the support of funding from technology grants indicating the sufficient autonomy of the district to implement innovative projects. The districts involved in the consortium appear to have sufficient autonomy in that they have been working together over time to align standards, improve professional development, build PLCs, and pilot creative programs and projects for students.

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

10

8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes support and evidence of collaboration from local colleges and the university. Senators, representatives, civic groups, business groups, and non-profits indicate their support for the proposed activities. Clear evidence is presented that documents the principals' involvement in reviewing the proposal. There is also strong evidence to support that teacher leader and union groups reviewed the proposal. It is strength that two public comment meetings were held for parents at each school.

Annual consortium surveys are described that include responses from 6,150 parents, students, and staff. The survey's impact upon the development of the proposed activities is unclear. There is a lack of evidence that feedback informed the development of the plan.

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

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium provides a very focused approach to developing the plan by identifying four areas with common need across the six districts. Time and learning is considered as one focus area and is a reasonable topic to address when considering plans for reform.

The proposal is heavily based upon teacher training, teacher collaboration, and the development of formative assessments through teacher review. The proposal acknowledges and addresses the need for time for teachers to provide instruction while continuing to receive training and participate in PLCs. It is not clear what the role of the principal or instructional leader is in the PLC process. Leadership involvement is not well described.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The strength of the quality of the plan is in the collaborative consortium approach to sharing access to resources to impact children and their teachers. The unique use of the example of a teacher's response to her experiences in a current pilot project provides a clear vision of the creativity involved across the consortium in providing a variety of experiences. The cross- district approach to implementation of RTI is also evidence that the needs of individual students are being addressed. There is data provided to demonstrate the growth of high needs students over the period of the collaboration.</p> <p>The proposal will build upon experiential learning including the community in developing project based opportunities for students. This is a feasible and sound approach to increasing community involvement in the schools and in addressing project goals for career ready students.</p> <p>Technology is a justified strategy for serving students across a six district consortium in a rural area in order to provide them with access to career options and complete coursework at their own pace.</p> <p>The inclusion of parents in reviews of student needs through meetings with teachers, mentors, and advisors strengthens the quality of the plan, however, the proposal is unclear in identifying the student access to their data and how frequently parents will review plans and provide input.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The proposal indicates that teachers will be supported through professional development, leadership teams, technological training, and</p>		

collaboration in order to deliver personalized learning to students. A delineated description by year provides a clear intention to organize the services and build from year to year upon previous experience. The collaboration across the consortium to support college and career ready students is also described through the use of multiple strategies (electronic portfolios, the career exploration projects, mentorship, and project-based learning).

Involving peer groups in teacher observation and the three times yearly evaluation of teachers is an indication that the consortium teachers are prepared to participate as leaders and peer coaches. This strengthens the proposals likelihood of supporting teachers and directly impact the classroom setting for students.

Training is noted as a need for implementing evaluation systems. The proposal indicates that principals will be evaluated on a regular basis and administrators will be reviewed for their effectiveness.

The plan indicates that parent reviews of progress will not begin until year two of the services. This does not support sufficient opportunities for input and revision to personalized plans.

The plan is of high quality because it is focused and addresses vital issues (time needed for training, pacing of lessons) that are necessary to have in place for successful reform and personalization of instruction for students. The consortium approach to training teachers and individualizing student goals is a supportive effort to prepare them for college and/or careers.

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 proposal indicates a comprehensive policy is in place in that the schools and districts involved in the consortium have worked together to develop common calendars and a system of management while also providing for flexibility at each site in delivering the proposed services. Common staff development days are evidence that the schools and teachers are provided opportunities for collaboration. Allowing students to work at their own pace is a strong foundation for developing personalized learning. The intention of the consortium to look outside of its own resources in visiting successful transformative school systems is a strength. The high level of current collaboration across a six district rural area is strong support for a successful implementation of the model. Students will be grouped by skill level whether they are ELL students or not. It is unclear how often the success of this approach will be reviewed. The flexibility of the groupings is relevant information that is not included or described.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The project justifiably and creatively involves students as responsible for assisting their parents in technology training that will take place through orientation sessions and bi-annual conferences. Addressing the strategy of peer tutors for students in use of technology is consistent and compatible with implementing a program involving students in their own accountability and accountability for each other. Student involvement in training, opportunities for Internet access on school buses, expanded opportunities for parents to access information, and orientation services, support a high quality plan. The proposal indicates that a data system will be put into place that will allow parents access to a variety of data. A plan to use a system that allows parents to export and import data is addressed with support of a technology integrationist to develop the capacity for this type of access following the grant funding term. The consortium describes a current system that may be expanded upon. Assistants will provide support for technology to teachers and support that is currently in place in the district. The consortium will support expanding Internet access for students and parents and thereby increase personalized learning. The consortium is considering developing a system rather than purchasing one. This is a strength in the quality of the plan as it indicates the intent of the consortium to work with a data system appropriate to their use and the needs of their students.		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	4

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The plan for continuous improvement is not described in sufficient detail to be considered high quality. The plan is presented in general terms and lacks the specifics to the frequency of reviews by cross-district PLC teams, by the leadership, by parents, and with students. Regular meetings are noted but the process for obtaining feedback is not clear, therefore the implementation of a high quality plan is not evidenced.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: Partnerships are built into the proposal however; the details are not provided that would allow for continual review and adjustment. Specific strategies for extending current opportunities for partners to collaborate and review program goals are not noted. The quality of the plan is limited by the lack of details on the process for obtaining feedback from all stakeholders and using feedback for improvement. The process is not descriptive enough to assure ongoing communication with the stakeholders.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: The consortium is unable to provide cross-district data and develop baselines for the performance measures. This limits the ability to define a high quality approach towards improvement and set appropriate and ambitious goals. A timeline is provided but does not link the activities clearly to the intended goals and measures of assessment and review. The consortium demonstrates its intention to create a high quality plan for continuous improvement but is not able to describe the plan prior to obtaining the baseline data.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: Cross district peer reviews is a justifiable and reasonable strategy to support review of data to inform the classroom environment directly, however, details are not provided as to frequency and methods of collecting the data from these peer reviews. The lack of definition of process limits a clear vision of the plan for continuous improvement. In describing the school leadership teams and acknowledging the time necessary for staff development and cross-district collaboration, the proposal supports a strategy of collaboration that if fully developed would increase the likelihood of a process of ongoing feedback from teachers. This would effectively address the need to fully describe the impact of review and improvement on the classroom environment.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The budget is appropriate for the proposed activities with the exception that the need for the extensive travel budget over the period of the grant is not clearly described. The trip to Finland is not convincing in its justification. The proposal provides evidence that several prior grant awards will be integrated into the services to be provided. The district has received federal funding for rural areas including a Challenge Grant, and a data grant from IES that will be used in the project to support the goals as stated. The district shows evidence that these grant awards have been integrated into the system through the early childhood program and technology support. There is evidence that the technology systems will be supported by provided each participating district with a specialist. Specific trainers are not identified in the contractual area for professional development. It is unrealistic to have staff travel to a presenter rather than the presenter travel to the sites.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

Sustainability in professional development is ensured through each district in the consortium demonstrating a commitment to the project and collaboration through the expenditure of \$10 per student for professional development to be continued following the end of the grant term. The technology to be implemented will be sustained by the district technology staff. Local, federal, and state obtained funding will be integrated into the services as evidence of potential sources for sustainability. Each district will continue funding staff development, technology, and staff time for PLCs. This demonstrates the commitment of the collaborative nature of the consortium to sustain the project goals.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	3

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The proposal clarifies the local resources available to support students and families and specifies population groups and services to provide strong evidence that multiple collaborative efforts are in place and the intention to build upon them is clear to address an alignment of services to students and impact the classroom.

Resource alignment is limited in that formalized systems to inform families and involve them in the personalization of student performance and expectations is not effectively described beyond access to technology systems. The partnership of the consortium indicates the proposal will address this formalized system however it is not yet in place and therefore does not clearly support the engagements of parents in decision-making.

Integration of services is not addressed in a manner to support an integrated, comprehensive approach to services. The socio-emotional needs of the students are not addressed. Benchmark indicators are not identified. The current services and resources in the communities that work with the consortium districts are not described. The ability to track this data and build upon current services is not addressed.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The proposal's strength in addressing the core educational assurances is through its model to expand upon current collaborative times for teachers and a cross-district approach to educational improvement, data systems, and the implementation of Common Core Standards. The impact and services to students is teacher- focused and addresses the efforts to personalize learning environments and develop teacher-student relationships. Developing assessment models across the districts that involve teacher created formative assessments also points significantly to the role of the teacher in improving and revising strategies for children. Therefore, I consider that the proposal met the absolute priority.

Total	210	148
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	13

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The optional budget proposes a consortium model to develop personalized learning environments for students in rural areas that could be disseminated. The plan to create laboratory school environments is innovative and ambitious and extends the opportunities for community collaboration with researchers. The activities are directed toward web-based technologies and teacher support for sharing strategies with extensive video taping opportunities that would allow for self-monitoring, peer review, and revision of program goals and efforts. These examples support the solution to increasing teacher effectiveness to squarely impact the classroom.

The optional budget proposes nearly \$200,000 in additional travel funds for sharing the model however, it is not clear where the teacher time is required or funded to participate in the opportunities.



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Technical Review Form

Application #0711MN-2 for Windom Area School District - 0177

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Buffalo Ridge Educational Alliance (BREA) sets forward a vision that is bold but incomplete. This alliance of six rural districts proposes to reinvent formal and informal learning experiences around personalized, individual learning plans. They propose a vision that would make the content of learning constant, but allow time to be variable. The implications of this vision could be profound, but they are not spelled out in the application in a way that would make them easy to imagine -- and a clearly imaginable end state is critical to producing a vision that can be shared. For example, the district's proposal does not point to examples of other districts or learning organizations that they see as worthy of emulating or replicating. The application makes a large investment in studying Finland, but does not spell out what about Finland's approach matches with the alliance's vision for change. In practical terms, how will teaching, learning and leading change in such an approach? The vagueness of this vision detracts from its credibility.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's approach to implementation is straightforward:</p> <p>(a) The application proposes to include all students and educators in all schools in the six BREA districts. The districts all meet the eligibility requirements.</p> <p>(b) The participating schools are listed, as required.</p> <p>(c) The scope of the effort is 6,530 students in 6 districts, with about 550 teachers and 20 schools. The aggregate percentage of high need students is just above the required 40% threshold.</p> <p>The application provides strong evidence that the districts have a compelling history of collaboration, and spells out in persuasive detail how the consortium can be sustained and function constructively. For these reasons, it scores in the high range.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal includes all schools in the participating districts. The proposal discusses options for expanding the multi-district collaborative beyond the period of the grant. This is speculative, but the strong and long-standing partnership with the SW/WC service cooperative provides evidence that these districts have a history of successful, sustained partnerships.</p> <p>The quality of the proposal depends significantly on the partners' ability to move past intentions to implementation. These districts are contemplating a significant transformation, but there are significant gaps in describing specific actions that individuals will take to get there. For example, the applicant does not describe a model of how PLCs will function, as a practical matter. The BREA districts do not appear to be replicating an existing high-quality model; rather they are creating their own way -- and they even propose to invest significantly in documenting and disseminating insights from their work. At present, however, the plan is longer on intention than in detail</p>		

The proposal scores in the medium range for this element.

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

The BREA proposal for improving student outcomes does not inspire confidence. It includes many pages of numbers that purport to serve as targets, but these numbers are all generated from a simple, uniform formula: status quo proficiency plus 2% per year, regardless of starting point or plans to do something about it. This plan would leave Marshall High School, after the grant period, still with three-quarters of its low-income students failing to rise to proficiency.

In a proposal that aims to be about personalization, this is a less than compelling set of targets.

Low points awarded.

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	4

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- a) The consortium does not present strong evidence of a track record of success in raising student achievement in math and reading as measured by math and reading scores and subscores. The highest level of increase in reading proficiency was in Lakeview (+6.19%); in Windom proficiency rates actually declined by 4.77%. The districts showed a similar spread of results in math. The application shows that BREA districts have high graduation rates relative to other districts in Minnesota and the nation, but cannot point to improvement in this metric.
- b) The district does not claim to have experience with significant reforms in its lower-performing schools. Instead, it argues that it has taken intervention actions at the student level through Project discovery. This approach is consistent with the personalization goals of the overall proposal; it would be more persuasive if the schools could point to evidence of success in student learning as a result.
- c) Some of the BREA districts appear to have stronger experience and infrastructure for student information systems than others. (TSIS and Infinite Campus are named specifically.) The plan does not clarify to what extent this information is used to inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. It appears that these districts may benefit from a statewide effort under an ESEA waiver.

Points awarded in the medium range for this criterion

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

The applicant asserts that the required data are made transparent to the public in each LEA, but does not provide demonstrated evidence of this transparency.

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

The districts in the BREA group appear to have the flexibility under state legal, statutory and regulatory conditions to implement their plan. The implementation of the FLY consortium demonstrates that districts have room to maneuver.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application includes strong quantitative and qualitative evidence of significant stakeholder participation in development of the proposal. For example, feedback from teachers resulted in specific changes to the plan to implement Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs), a key element of the proposal. The application includes MOU signatures from the teachers union leadership, but not quantitative information about the depth or breadth of support from teachers.

The many letters of support for the proposal provide evidence of a coordinated campaign that extended throughout the BREA participant districts.

High points awarded.

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

The applicant's response does not make clear how it will conduct analysis of its status in implementing personalized learning environments. The defined elements of a high-quality plan (goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties) are not addressed.

Low points awarded.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	13

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a)(i) The proposal calls for students to individually design their own learning plans, supported by teachers and mentors. There are problems of credibility in the districts' loosely described approach to accomplishing this, but the approach would certainly help to connect the work of learning with identification of learning goals.

(a)(ii) The proposal calls for development of individual digital portfolios as a way to tie together experiences inside and outside the classroom. The structure of such a portfolio does not appear to have been defined, so it is unclear how it will support achievement relative to the standards.

(a)(iii) The proposal implies a highly customized set of approaches to learning, with teachers encouraging students to pursue a wide variety of subjects that interest them. There is some tension here; it is not clear how the schools intend to support this breadth of variety while also providing deep learning experiences. Some Professional Learning Communities might be successful in addressing this challenge, but the proposal leaves a lot to the imagination.

(a)(iv) The plan does not appear to address student exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives.

(a)(v) If the BREA schools are successful at actively involving students in the plan for their own learning, students will emerge with new strength in many "soft skills."

(b)(i) The applicants' response makes it clear that the schools intend to enable a personalized sequence of learning for students. The application appears to rely heavily on use of SAS Curriculum Pathways for delivering this content. The application does not make it particularly clear how this will be effected and what changes the schools will make to ensure that it "sticks" for students and teachers

(b)(ii) The plan seems likely to lead to a high variety of instructional approaches; it does not provide a clear process for evaluating these options to make judgments about quality that would enable continuous improvement.

(b)(iii) The district plans to expand usage of the SAS Curriculum, which it has judged to be useful for "re-teaching and reinforcing" as well as "enriching and challenging."

(b)(iv) The districts' plan will require teachers to become very comfortable with the learning content in the SAS Curriculum. A strong investment in professional development will be essential to accomplishing this. There is room in the budget for such an investment, though at a very high cost. The plan leaves open how feedback will be delivered.

(b)(v) The plan does not provide specific insight into how the districts will address the needs of high needs students. This is of particular concern when paired with the very weak goals for special education students expressed in response to A(4) .

(c) The proposal does not appear to include a plan for training and support for students, focusing its training and support investments on staff instead. This seems likely to be the right choice.

In consideration of the above criteria, the applicant's response in the overall area of a high quality plan for personalizing the learning environment is scored in the medium range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a i-iv) The BREA districts have a strong outline for a four-year plan for professional development in support of personalized teaching and learning. Leadership for implementation of the plan is clearly defined at the level of each district, where Staff Development Committees or Q-Comp Councils will take the lead. The actions to implement the work will take place through Professional Learning Communities, which the application gives the impression will be defined more rigorously in BREA than in typical districts.

(b i-iii) The plan includes frequent teacher evaluation and feedback, and allows for investment in new teacher induction. The existing mentor/induction program does not appear to directly include coaching on personalization of learning, but it is likely that this practice could evolve. The districts appear to be considering using either the Danielson or Marzano model to support teacher focus and improvement. There does not appear to be a plan in place to select processes and tools that can facilitate matching of student needs with high-quality learning resources, or to focus energies on areas of improvement for such resources.

(c i,ii) The teacher evaluation system included in the plan seems likely to provide constructive opportunities for educators to learn from mentors and from one another as they develop a new, more personalized approach to teaching and learning. The investments in teacher mentorship, particularly for new teachers, seems likely to produce both results in student learning and professional growth for teachers and leaders.

(d) The applicant does not present a persuasive, actionable plan for increasing effective instruction and leadership for hard to staff schools, subjects and specialty areas.

The applicant's plan scores in the high range, despite its omissions, because of the strength of its four-year outline for action in the focus area of personalized teaching.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>(a) The BREA governance structure appears to leave each of the six participating school boards with autonomy to allocate grant funds and personnel, without substantial limitation with regard to the purpose of the grant. This appears to be an incomplete level of commitment to the goal of investing in personalized learning, and there does not appear to be a mechanism to require the participating schools to stick with it when the inevitable challenges and differences of opinion arise.</p> <p>(b) The partnership plan provides school leadership teams with the necessary autonomy.</p> <p>(c) A stated aim of the plan is to provide students the opportunity to progress at their own academic pace. The application does not clarify “practices, policies and rules” that can put this vision into practice.</p> <p>(d) The BREA response to the application states that teachers will devise methods for students to demonstrate mastery of material. The plans for putting this into practice have not been developed, and BREA is not yet able to present a timeline for making it possible.</p> <p>(e) The plan calls for targeting instruction by grouping learners based on their demonstrated skill level, then directing additional resources toward students that require extra support. This is practical and clear.</p> <p>BREA is working to accomplish a difficult transition, and this element of the plan leaves some important gaps. It is scored in the medium range.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- a) The BREA proposal leans heavily on availability of technology that requires connectivity, not a given in a rural location. A noteworthy element of the plan is the commitment to provide home wi-fi access to students in economic need, as well as connectivity for school buses. This is an impressive commitment.
- b) The plan for tech support is adequate.
- c) The plan for use of open formats makes it somewhat unclear whether the districts are committed to adopting the same platform, or whether they may each choose different technologies so long as they are each capable in principle of data interoperability.
- d) The plan for interoperability lacks clarity for the same reason as the plan for use of open formats. The advanced discussions with SAS suggest that the BREA partnership is leaning toward a single platform. Although the application does not commit outright, the level of doubt is not large.

The applicant scores in the high range for this criterion.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The six districts have established clear momentum in working together to develop this plan, which gives it credibility. However, the strategy for continuous improvement is described in only very loose terms. The plan does not define clear milestones for evaluation, definitions of the elements that will be reviewed, or plans for public review. The applicant acknowledges the need for this work, which it assigns to "the Project Director and SW/WC, in collaboration with teachers and administrators."</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Although the applicant's plan for ongoing communication and engagement is skeletal enough to warrant a low score, the BREA districts' history of effective communication is so strong that it seems very likely to remedy this gap.</p> <p>Medium points awarded.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The BREA proposal for performance measurement is relatively clear about the use of value-added measures, but if this is to cover only 35% of the measure of performance, it is critically incomplete. In the critical areas of health and social-emotional metrics, for example, the proposal is silent. It leaves these matters to be teacher-developed, but without defining a process for how or when such development will take place.</p> <p>Low points awarded for this element.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The BREA group has committed resources to external evaluation of the effectiveness of its investments. Some of the planned investments in data systems seem likely to help the group improve its capacity to base targets on data. The proposal does not clearly spell out how the group will adjust its plans, for example by defining key meetings or project milestones that will be reviewed. However, the project sketch in response to (C)(2) implies that such milestones could be defined without great drama.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's budget is suitably itemized and detailed to provide a reasonable basis for action. It does, however, show signs of being a working draft. For example, the eye-catching proposal to equip busses with wireless networking capabilities in order to make school transportation time into learning time does not appear to be clearly costed out in the budget. The estimated cost of \$50,000 for the proposal to fly the principals and district leaders to Finland seems reasonable, though the rationale for the trip is not well articulated. The application states that the districts will provide network access to the homes of low-income students, but this does not appear to be clearly costed out in the budget.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For sustainability, the plan appears to depend significantly on community members stepping up dramatically to fill the void that will be left when RTT-D funding ends. Some elements (such as iPads, a major cost) will simply be shifted off the RTT-D books and onto the districts, but the plan does not specify what the districts will do to make room in their budgets for this transfer of responsibility. Equipment costs can probably be trusted to come down in price with effective negotiation and the passage of time. But the significant investments in time for faculty collaboration and professional development seem likely to continue.</p> <p>The demonstrated strength of community support for the plan permits a score in the medium range.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	1
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The BREA proposal lists many organizations that its six member districts have separately established relationships with. This is not a coherent partnership as envisioned by RTT-D. 2) The proposal does not delineate measurable desired results to be achieved from partnerships. 3) The proposal does not clarify how it will track results, target resources, scale, or improve results. 4) The proposal does not describe clearly how it would integrate education and services. 5) By working through the SW/WC service cooperative, the BREA districts will establish a framework that may be of use in developing the capacity of staff in the areas required 6) The proposal does not identify clear, measurable performance metrics. <p>Low points awarded for this element.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant districts present a persuasive case that they intend to diligently pursue personalization of teaching and learning through a combination of approaches including the aggressive use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and use of technologies for instruction, with a networked iPad in the hands of every student from home to bus to classroom. The proposal is very weak in the area of concrete steps to get to a personalized solution, and it offers few performance measures for success, but the vision is compelling and the</p>		

coalition of interest among the districts appears quite strong.

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:

1) The applicant argues that as a set of rural districts, it has an importantly different perspective on the meaning of personalization of education. The rationale for its proposal is to create resources to help show how to bridge that gap. This is a reasonable premise, but a vague one. The applicant does not explain how the personalized learning needs they intend to address are substantially different from those facing other learners and teachers. This rationale is not persuasive.

2) The BREA plan proposes to create model classrooms that showcase personalization of learning and teaching, develop a national clearinghouse for web-based discovery of greatness in personalization, build six high-quality video production studios in rural locations to create great content, and conduct a road show to tell people about it. It does not appear from the proposal that the BREA districts have special skills or connections in web development, video production, or media project management. This plan is not of high quality.

3) BREA proposes to tackle this vision with a budget of only \$2 million. Nearly half of this amount would be spent on creating high-cost video production facilities in each of the six participating districts. Another half million would go toward an investment in trying to become a clearing house of good ideas for the benefit of other districts, already a crowded field. The proposal does not include a marketing budget or analysis of why BREA would be a successful competitor in this media market. A further quarter million would fund researchers to document the story of BREA's presumed success, an investment that seems premature.

This adds up to a list of activities that would have a vanishingly low chance of success. Worse, they would have a high chance of distracting the districts from their core aims.



Race to the Top - District Technical Review Form

Application #0711MN-3 for Windom Area School District - 0177

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The information presented supports the applicant's vision to accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning and increase equity through personalized student support by building on collaboration, college and career ready standards, teacher and principal effectiveness and student data systems.
- (1) Collaboration - the BREA districts have a successful history of collaboration among the districts. 5 out of 6 of the districts joined the FLY (Flexible Learning Year) consortium that aligns the calendars and job embedded professional development activities of 25 partnering school districts with the MNSCU (MN State Colleges and University) schools in the region. The FLY summary of results documents evidence that student achievement on standardized tests has improved since this collaboration was initiated, and the perceptions of parents, teachers, an faculty/staff have been positive. Also, the BREA engaged in cross district collaborations through the development of teacher led academies.

- (2) College and Career Ready Standards - MN law require the state to revise academic standards in each subject to include an increased level of rigor that prepares s's for college and careers. MN adopted CCSS in Math and ELA and will adopt Science in 2017. The Univ of MN and the MN State Colleges and Univ Systems have certified the math academic standards declaring that s's who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the post secondary level. MN was funded a Gates Foundation grant which was selected due to leadership and history success in raising student achievement and graduation requirements for all s's. In fact, the BREA districts have graduation rates higher than the MN average, as well as the national average.
- (3) Teacher and Principal Effectiveness - BREA districts have been leaders in recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining high quality teachers and principals and the majority of districts have alternative compensation systems. 4 out of 6 districts participate in MN's voluntary Q-Comp program. In 2014 state law will require that 35% of teacher evaluations be contingent on student achievement data using a value-added assessment model. BREA superintendents will implement an evaluation model that parallels this model.
- (4) Student Data Systems - BREA districts have a student management system in place to monitor student progress and to identify s's in need of interventions. The districts also write SMART goals and the Q-Comp districts create district wide goals as well as building goals. All districts engage in PLC's where teachers use student assessment results to identify differentiated instructional strategies.

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

10

7

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant's approach to implementation will somewhat support high quality LEA level and school level implementation.
- (a) Process used to select schools - the six BREA districts encompass 20 schools and were selected to participate given past collaboration of the Flexible Learning Year Consortium (5 out of 6 districts), commitment to alternative teacher and administrator compensation systems, understanding and capacity to implement effective data systems, and commitment to deepening student learning and increasing student achievement.
- (b) List of schools - BREA consists of 6 districts. All schools will participate in each district: Jackson County Central 4 schools, Lakeview 2 schools, Marshall 5 schools, Minnesota 2 schools, Pipestone 4 schools, and Windom 3 schools for a total number of 20 schools participating in grant activities.
- (c) Total number of participating schools - 6,530 s's will participate based on 41.04% qualifying for free and reduced meals, 4,242 are high need s's and 561 teachers will participate.
- Overall, not sure why only 5 of the 6 districts are being represented in the consortium.

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

10

7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant's plan supports LEA wide reform and change utilizing the BREA Logic Model.
- The BREA Logic Model is a model of technology integration, use of data systems, and focus on personalized learning plans that deepen student learning and increase student achievement. This model will be a model for other schools in the region. Relationships with the Southwest/West Central Service Coop, and MN State Technical and Community College have been built through collaboration on the Flexible Learning Year Consortium. SW/WC has been conducting trainings, available to all teachers in the region, related to utilizing iPad technologies and social media. Additionally, MN State Technical and Community College partners with the Marshall district (one of the 6 BREA districts) on an internship program where high school s's are provided an opportunity to earn college credit while they gain experience with a local business, non profit or other organization.
- BREA hopes to partner with post secondary institutions that support a vision to deepen student learning by providing each student with a personalized learning plan in a technologically rich environment.
- BREA intends to send teachers, administrators, and other leaders to local and national conferences to disseminate the results of the initiatives, and to get feedback on BREA reforms. BREA intends to give presentations at American Assoc of School Administrators and MN Assoc of School Administrators as well as other conferences of interest to teachers and other stakeholders.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- The information presented will support the applicant's goals for improving student learning and performance and increased equity by demonstrating achievable annual goals in the following areas of performance on summative

assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates and college enrollement.

- (a) Performance on summative assessments - the district will measure performance on summative assessments using the MN Comprehensive Assessment for reading, math, using the percentage of s's who are proficient. The district will implement value added methodology to measure annual growth for a 2% increase.
- (b) Decreasing achievement gaps - the district will implement differentiated instruction and formative assessments through the work of PLC's to provide targeted instruction to subgroups. Additionally, the district will examine annual MN Comprehensive Assessment data, and implement assessments from NWEA (not sure what this acronym stands for as it is not cited in proposal) to examine student achievement and examine progress in closing achievement gaps
- (c) Graduation rates - the district's current graduation rates are higher than the MN and the national average. These higher rates will make it difficult to obtain a significant increase; however, a goal of increasing graduation rates by half a percent annually has been established
- (d) College enrollment rates - given the district's current college enrollment rates make it difficult to obtain a significant increase; however, a goal of increasing rates by half a percent annually has been established

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:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant somewhat addresses its ability to achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its lowest performing schools. • The proficiency scores in reading and math for special ed s's show an increase one year, decrease the next year and an increase the next year. The scores are inconsistent from year to year. • High school graduation rates which are higher when compared to the state and the nation with all of the districts graduating with over 84% of high school s's. • It name the reforms such as the RTI and Project Discovery, but not sure how ambitious these are. • It describes ways to make student performance data available to students, parents and parents: Infinite Campus, TSIS, MN Dept of Education and how it publishes district report cards, district websites, annual reports on curriculum, instruction, and student achievement. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information presented does not demonstrate evidence of a high level of increasing transparency in processes, practices and investments. • It briefly describes the audit process, but does not provide any charts or graphs to illustrate the audit process. • It refers the reviewer to contact the business office of each respective district to obtain the information for personnel salaries at the school level for instructional support, teachers and non personnel expenditures at the school level; however, the evidence does not appear to be a high level of transparency. 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has somewhat demonstrated evidence to support the applicant's state context for implementation. • It describes how the BREA districts have sufficient autonomy to implement the proposed personalized learning system. • It details how the implementation will follow all rules of the grant, rules of the Federal Dept of Education, and State of MN Dept of Education. • It details how on the local level, each district in the consortium was given permission and approval by their respective Board of Education. • Overall, the applicant hasn't articulated a plan that speaks to why only 5 out of 6 BREA districts are members of the Flexible Learning Year consortium, which authorizes districts to evaluate, plan and employ learning programs. 		

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has somewhat demonstrated evidence to support stakeholder engagement. • It describes how all six BREA districts are members of the SW/WC service cooperative and five out of six districts joined the FLY (Flexible Learning Year) consortium, an initiative that aligned the calendars of 25 partnering schools districts with the MN State Colleges and University schools in the region. • It details how students, families, teachers and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal which included: district board meetings, various community organizations, non profits, local chambers of commerce, and live radio broadcast to highlight RTTT-D opportunity. • It includes several strong letters of support from a senator, many mayors from this area, non profits, colleges, and other community stakeholders. • The applicant does not mention why only 5 out of 6 districts joined the Flexible Learning Year consortium. 		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information presented somewhat supports the applicant's analysis of needs and gaps. • It describes a "time and learning model" - this model takes time out of the equation and allows s's to learn at their own pace • It demonstrates student proficiency using the formative assessment process that BREA teachers will be engaged in will allow educators the ability to make real time adjustments for s's and with s's to ensure that learning is rigorous, relevant and connected to the essential standards that each student is expected to master • It discusses career assessments and how to engage career counseling and how using the information gathered will help s's select courses to best prepare them for that ultimate career • It details 21st century skills and how to incorporate creativity, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and how to use technology to access and analyze data • It does not present information about what the principal will be doing in this process. 		

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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information presented somewhat supports the applicant's plan for learning and teaching. • It describes how it will prepare all s's to be global citizens who will lead and collaborate, creatively problem solve, understand other cultures, practice civic responsibilities, be technologically savvy, and understand and use a variety of media and information sources • It describes how it will restructure thinking in order to create a system where s's have the resources and supports to create their own learning paths, and to understand what skills are needed to become college and career ready in our increasingly global world • It describes how it will continue to embed 21st century skills into curriculum not only on a small scale and through various pilot programs, and also through the proposed model where high quality teachers are trained, recruited and rewarded to guide s's in goal setting, identifying interests, and continuously tying these interests to s's personalized learning plans. • It does not describe what the principals will be doing or how the principals will be trained. • With respect to the support of parents and educators, it describes how it will integrate 21st century skills, provide experiential learning and inquiry opportunities through project based learning and mentorship opportunities with community members and organizations which will deepen s's learning experiences and fuel interest in college and career readiness, and will provide all s's access to powerful technology and address rural isolation by providing s's with nearly instantaneous access to information and expanded learning opportunities. • It does not necessarily speak to how the plan will support the parents.. 		

It describe how s's will have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen their learning using direct teacher instruction, technology assisted instruction, mentors/internships, collaboaration, multi media presentations, debate, original creative work, and other such instructional methods.

- It details how the learning environment will include summer break activities, field trips, community projects, and internships.
- The plan describes implementing consortium wide leadership, professional development, and community partnerships.
- Overall, the description of these details do not necessarily appear to be high quality. It appears that the plan is describing a process that is already in place.

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

20

15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The information presented will support the applicant's plan for teaching and leading.
- It describes frequent opportunities to collaborate with peers and develop capacity to design learning environments that allow for personalied learning.
- The implementation of technology will be created, managed, and communicated through these devices; additionally, it addresses rural isolation by providing s's with instananeous access to information and expanded learning oportunties, as well as college and career opportunities.
- It will create a supportive environment for reform to support personalized and deeper student learning, as well as the use of technology to support data synthesis and utilization. BREA will engage in district wide professional development opportunities for teaching and learning activities for four years and includes a yearly timeline:
- year 1 - within and cross district PLC's will be implemented, and focus will be to embed 21st century skills into core curricular areas
- year 2 - implementation of formative assessment using digital tools, and incorporation of summative and formative student data
- year 3 - project based learning and e-portfolio
- year 4 - PLP fully implemented, PK-12
- It will focus on technology integration providing a one to one model for all s's, regardless of income.
- It will create and sustain highly effective teachers and administrators using growth based evaluations using either the Danielson Framework for Teaching or the Marzano Methods; these evalation systems will use a value-added assessment methods, where 35% of the evaluations consider student data.
- It will improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness and will require training new staff additional guidance and mentoring in: purposeful planning and preparation, effective classroom environment, effective instruction, professional responsibilities, and effective use and knowledge of current data systems.
- It will include a strategy to provide school leaders with data and information to accelerate student progress toward meeting college and career ready requirements include having policies and procedures to assess current data and teacher needs annually to provide for informed decisions on annual needs.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has somewhat demonstrated how practices, policies and rules will facilitate personalized learning. • The plan will establish a governing board encompassing all six districts and rotating the responsibility amongst the superintendents of each BREA. • The plan will allow each district to make its own personnel decisions and establish its own school lead team and calendars. • The plan will allow s's to demonstrate mastery of skill at their own pace and allowing different ways to master skills including pre tests, projects, on line curriculum, written papers and videos. • The plan will allow differentiation where s's receive targeted instruction and will move at their own pace with some moving faster or slower than others and also using a paraprofessional. • The plan does not necessarily speak to s's with disabilities or English Language Learners. 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant has somewhat demonstrated evidence to support how school infrastructure will support personalized learning.
- The district will train s's, parents, and educators to the implementation of the personalized learning plans.
- The district will provide a variety of sources for technical support during school hours and after school hours.
- The district will allow parents to export and import data from various electronic learning systems, such as PLATO and K12.
- The district will purchase or design an interoperable data system that uses a common, established structure that allows data to easily flow from one system to another in an open format.
- Overall, more detail should be articulated in the plan to ensure parents who do not have computer access, can get it or have access to it. A timeline for incorporating the wifi hot spots should have been detailed.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has not necessarily demonstrated a strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process. • The plan describes how the six separate districts will work together to to evaluate student performance data, expand opportunities for peer review, use technology to easily share and get feedback on lesson plans, videos of teaching or student's creative work or other products to showcase learning. A timeline supporting the details of the above strategy would be nice to see here. • The plan describes how regular meetings with s's and parents will serve as a communication opportunity to jointly collaborate on how to best support a student's progress toward being college and career ready. More detail should be articulated here for this strategy. • The plan tell how the project director in collaboration with BREA teachers and administrators will create evaluation processes and data collection tools to document the successes and areas in need of improvement regarding collaborations with community partnerships related to implement mentoring opportunities and project based learning. A timeline should be included here for this strategy. • Overall, the plan does not include a timeline nor articulates sufficient details for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process. 		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has demonstrated strategies to support ongoing communication and engagement. • The plan will continue with the existing partnerships including SW/WC service cooperative, local chambers of commerce, local city government agencies, MN Rural Education Association, Southwest Initiative Association, post secondary institutions and private industries. • The plan includes strategies for regular communication and engagement, collaborations for BREA s's to complete mentorships, internships, and engagement in project based learning opportunities. 		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has not demonstrated evidence to support performance measures. • It describes the states' statutes for requiring districts to establish an annual evaluation process by 2014-15. It describes 		

two methods that will measure academic progress using s's longitudinal data on an assessment instrument: value added model and growth or projection model. But there is no plan in place to support performance measures.

- The BREA districts do not provide a plan to support performance measures.

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

- The applicant has demonstrated a plan to support evaluating effectiveness of investments.
- The plan will use school lead teams to provide direction for professional development activities to design a regular review process, include mechanisms to collect data from multiple stakeholders to evaluate the implementation of the weekly job embedded PLC's, embedding 21st century skills into the core curriculum, optimizing the use of technology in learning processes and products, and progress toward fully-implemented PLP's.
- The plan will use an external evaluator to conduct a meta-evaluation, using the Program Evaluation Standards to evaluate the PD(using Guskey's evaluation model), the use of technology, and collaborations with community partners, implementation of formative assessments, and compensation reform.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant has demonstrated evidence to support the budget for the project.
- Each BREA district will continue funding and state funds including a Longitudinal Data Grant from the Institute of Educational Statistics, RTTT Early Challenge Grant Award in 2011, Governor Dayton's 7 Point Plan for Excellence in Education, a grant from the MN Public Utilities Commission, and a grant from U.S. Dept of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service to support video conferencing capabilities.
- Funds will be used for one time investments to purchase technologies, national trips to model districts, and the international trip to Finland.
- Funds will be used for ongoing operational costs during and after the grant period include ongoing professional development, each BREA district will commit \$10 per student and various technology commitments annually.

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

- The applicant has demonstrated a plan that will support sustainability of project goals after the grant term.
- The applicant has obtained letters of support from local leaders, chambers of commerce, PTA's, and each of the mayors.
- The applicant has obtained support from state leaders, including the Commissioner of the MN Dept of Education, both of MN's U.S. Senators, and various statewide organizations, including MN Rural Education Association.
- Each district has committed \$10.00 per student toward continued professional development to create and sustain personalized learning plans.
- The applicant has structured the budget to commit to the iPad technology beyond the scope of the RTTT-D grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant has somewhat demonstrated strategies to support the competitive preference priority.
- The applicant tells that it will leverage personal relationships with local chambers of commerce, Schwan Food

Company, AGCO, Toro Industries, Action Track Chairs and Farmers Cooperative Association.

- However, it does not necessarily go into detail what it will do specifically with each of the aforementioned organizations.
- The applicant states it will build upon and expand strategic partnerships to provide student mentorship opportunities as well as critical linkages to ensure college and career ready s's. However, more detail needs to be provided here.
- It describes how school program resources would be aligned to bring in mentors from the business community into mentor programs, and expand partnerships with regional health services for student needs and services.
- It describes how an early childhood program will partner with Head Start to provide support for underserved s's and Junior Achievement, a program that teaches s's about money management and business, is embedded in BREA schools.
- It describes two population desired results as educational and community. These results determine the extent to which s's needs are being matched with resources. Counselors will meet with s's and parents to review key elements for a learning plan at the individual level
- It describes a partnership with public and private services that will integrate education and other services to create a strong regional presence for rural schools and communities. Additionally, it describes advancing improvements and performance excellence within organizations, individuals, and communities to help leaders identify strengths and improvement opportunities to build networks that bring information, resources, knowledge, and best practices to organizations.
- It details how the plan will build on capacity of schools with PD opportunities where teachers will collaborate with their peers, with parents, and with district administrators to identify the non academic needs of s's in their classrooms; the project director and assistant director will use technology to put together an easy to use resource of community assets available through partnerships.
- It describes how the effectiveness of this system will be annually evaluated by project staff, and take into consideration the feedback of participating s's and their families.
- However, there is no mention of a decision making process in place, nor are there any performance measures put in place. More detail needs to be provided here regarding the decision making process and identifying performance measures.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

- The information presented addresses how it will build on the core educational assurance areas.
- The applicant's plan is likely to improve student learning by envisioning transforming education through personalization through the implementation of project based learning and 21st century skills initiated by s's and through using one to one technologies. In addition, the applicant's plan will use the SAS Education Value Added Assessment System to put data into an actional format which will accelerate student progress, increase achievement levels, use highly effective teachers more appropriately, increase enrollment in rigorous coursework and improve college and career readiness.

Total	210	149
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant provides a rationale, plan and budget to support carrying out the activities for the optional budget supplement.
- It describes how it will incorporate "model classrooms" within the districts that other teachers, business and governmental leaders, and educational leaders can visit and hopefully replicate.

- It describes a national clearinghouse to use web based technologies to link districts with resources for implementing personal learning plans to include power point presentations, research, success stories, best practice, video and audio tutorials, and webinars
- It describes how educator instructional materials would implement video production labs that would allow for production of videos and audios that could be shared with other schools and districts intent on implementing personal learning plans, technology integration, and project based learning in the schools and districts; this will hopefully create an added venue for sharing best practice, lessons learned, and ongoing staff development for other districts.