



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0394AK-1 for Yukon-Koyukuk School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Alaskan interior districts present a bold plan to personalize education and teach Life Skills which responds well to the social and emotional needs of the population to be served. The focus on using data is commendable and important. The proposal includes a strong commitment to improved educator evaluations, employ student portfolios, act upon data and prepare students better for college and careers. One of the three districts has a mastery plan that it will share with the other districts. Each of the schools will use a small committee to monitor and guide the process.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal asserts that all of the schools are eligible although some schools appear to serve a much poorer group of students than the average schools. All the schools and their high need pupils are listed. The proposal calls for intensive evaluation and profession development for all of these small schools.</p> <p>There is no description of the needs of the state-wide Raven Correspondence school which serves almost half of the school population on an individualized plan which appears to be a model for Alaska and this consortium. Later on in the proposal it appears that Raven may be a state-wide school rather than under one of the LEAs. Given that half the students utilize this school, the proposal was deficient in not describing how it could help achieve the objectives.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The logic model is quite comprehensive and appears as Appendix Four in great detail. That model is presented as part of the plan. What is strong is the creation of a RT3 committee for each school which potentially will improve communication and frequent avaluation of progresss. It makes great sense that both teachers and students will be trained to monitor, track and improve their learning, and that such data will become part of a teacher's evaluation, not now the case.</p> <p>There is an important emphasis on using both technology and social support which is vital in a population afflicted by depression and suicides. The objective of eliminating entirely the very large achievement gap is proposed in this section, but may not be attainable in four years.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The achievement goals and objectives for student learning are ambitious, explicit for all students including Special Education, and potentially achievable since they are in the range of ten to twenty percent gains over four years. The achievement gap reduction plan for reading, writing and mathematics is plausible and solid given the emphasis on using data and evaluating teachers and principals.</p> <p>The projected increases from 20% to 78% in college attendance seemed much too ambitious, unrealistic and unachievable in four years. There is no persuasive evidence that either the village culture or the community colleges will enable these ambitions to be realized.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>To comply with (a) and (b) first one school turnaround and then four others are documented with graphs and data. No information was provided on college attendance but only school scores. These efforts have achieved measurable gains.</p> <p>Reliance on increased tutoring of students was the key intervention.</p> <p>The consortium commits to sharing academic performance data with students, educators and parents through a service called PowerSchool.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget process described allows for discussion of dollars allocated for instruction and staff. However, it falls just short of saying that all salaries are made explicit in the formats called for under RTTT guidelines. Most of the schools are so small and the staff limited in numbers that this may not be a real barrier to transparency since each school has a committee offering input into the budget. The information appears to be available but not in the required format.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The consortium clearly describes a system where school boards work with local school committees around each school who are allowed to adopt a philosophy and local curriculum. The correspondence school enjoys great flexibility to work with parents on home schooling and computer assisted courses, with the consent of the state. The state authorizes a number of career academies e.g for firefighters and health workers.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>They describe succinctly how teachers, principals and parents were consulted about this proposal. The teacher organizations gave their consent. Many of the tribal chiefs signed identical form letters stating they believed in the program.</p> <p>Business groups are rare in the Alaskan hinterland. The University of Alaska was an enthusiastic sponsor. In this sparsely settled region available sponsors were few but support from the chiefs was essential.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>What was excellent was the candid revelation that pupils do not now monitor their progress very well, and that teachers are not evaluated with the help of pupil achievement data. The plan constructively will correct those and other deficiencies. What sounds potentially helpful is the use of a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) for students and their teachers.</p> <p>This missed the "high quality" designation by not including timetables for addressing these issues.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
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(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Learning objectives (i,ii, and iii) will be key to career and college readiness and made tangible by use of PLP as an academic planning tool which makes sense. Exposure to other cultures is difficult in the tribal zone but handled potentially by field trips to Juneau and help from SERC, a resource center. Discussion of team work and creativity was very limited.</p> <p>Under (b) the Yukon consortium will implement Alaskan academic goals and add life skills through use of Phlight, a tool, and web based materials. Digitmath will be utilized and able students guided to AP and CLEP examinations. The role of the Raven correspondence school serving almost half of the population was missing, unfortunate because it builds on an individualized model with the consent of parents.</p> <p>Under (c) provisions for the support of students and parents are provided well though PLP and PowerSchool data resources.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Sections (a) (i through iv) require attention to implementation, measurement, and feedback which the Yukon consortium provides through PLP planning and a Maryland tool kit, along with multiple tools such as MAP, AimsWeb, and student growth measurements.</p> <p>Where this proposal is skimpy is section (iv) on how these data will be used to identify and strengthen highly effective principals who are key. The Danielson model evaluates teachers but Yukon needs a strong approach for developing effective school leaders, especially for small isolated schools with few resources. There is not much under (d) on assigning effective teachers hard to staff schools and subjects, presumably a huge challenge in rural Alaska.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>At the moment only one of the three districts has policies in place concerning mastery, mastery credits, and multiple times and ways to gain credit, although they all would in 2013. The very small schools can adjust staffing assignments and schedules. This proposal strongly commits to Special Ed students. There is no mention of ELL students because all are either Alaskan natives or Caucasians. The intentions are praiseworthy but the policies are not yet in place in all members of the consortium.</p> <p>As many as 1100 of their students (one half of the total) enroll in a state wide correspondence and online school, highly personalized, but omitted from discussion in most sections. The Raven school might even be a precedent and model of what is proposed. It is state managed, apparently and if so out of their control locally.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The high score reflects the consortium willingness to employ numerous tools, especially the Personalized PLP to guide and document personalized learning. Next they propose multiple ways to provide formative assessments three times a year through MAP and AimsWeb. Students, parents and educators will track progress through PowerSchool, but most parents will need training because they know nothing about this resource.</p> <p>Access to technology is an issue. One school has outdated computers. Others will have computer labs but there was no budget documentation at all. There is no discussion of security or technology resources needed, but a strong commitment to data systems and access.</p>		

### E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The strongest part of this section are the 48 questions about the effectiveness of the plan and progress toward the goals. These require modern technology and there is hardly any discussion of how this will be financed. The budget section is missing.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan for communication and engagement rests on 23 R3 committees for each school and the small village. The idea of quarterly reports on progress makes sense. The school principal will be key, but has numerous tools to explain progress or deficiencies at the school level. This component is handled appropriately. Parents, once they can use PowerSchool, will be informed and potentially engaged.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal included at least 16 measures. The plans measure how many students will be taught by effective teachers with effective principals, ambitious goals but not clear that this will be achievable. The most ambitious targets are for college attendance, from 50% to 90% which seems very ambitious and optimistic. The detailed projections and targets are detailed and commendable. They are measurable and display a strong commitment to serve better the children on the Alaskan interior.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section would rank higher if the budget for professional development and technology were displayed, which it was not.</p> <p>There appears to be an exceptionally strong commitment to evaluation using multiple measures, formative data, high school graduation tests, state of Alaska data and other tools, and to act on data..</p> <p>The role of colleges and the University of Alaska is mentioned mainly in support letters and not very adequately in the text. In tiny schools restructuring and compensation reform may not be issues, and they're not discussed in any detail.</p>		

### F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget provides for hiring sufficient staff to collect the data needed and to implement the educator evaluation system in accordance with state guidelines. The budget calls for appropriate vendor assistance in implementing tools such as MAP and AIMSweb, needed to analyze data.</p> <p>The staffing for a personalized learning team (PLP) is one of the largest component, but reasonable and aligned with the proposal.</p> <p>Budget for travel to model schools elsewhere in Alaska made great sense, given the rural and isolated nature of the interior region.</p> <p>They will invest in external evaluators, again responsive to the very small schools and remote locations which will need</p>		

feedback and help in interpreting progress or problems.

There are no references to foundation or corporate support for this project.

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

10

5

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal assumes that the grant funds will allow them to achieve all of their objectives without any future funding. This does not seem realistic, given the fact that computers and software may need replacement and upgrading after three or four years. In effect there is no plan to replace equipment needed to provide and store the data on student and educator achievement after the project ends.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: None submitted		

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: This Alaskan population is exceedingly deserving of service through RTTT. The proposal includes strategies to improve achievement, reduce the gaps, personalize learning, share data with stakeholders, promote career and college readiness, and responds to the core areas.		

Total	210	161
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0394AK-2 for Yukon-Koyukuk School District

### 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 Interior Alaska RT3 reform vision is commendable, based on its focus on improving the educational outcomes for the students living in the area's 39 villages where teachers, families and children are often isolated from the support and educational resources more easily available in many other areas of the state and country. The districts together plan to revise their curriculum, assessments, and accountability systems based on Alaska's new ELA/Math Standards; build a technology infrastructure to monitor and promote student achievement, improve educators' effectiveness, provide personal learning environments to all students, and close the achievement gap between Alaska Native and non Native students by addressing the needs of their lowest performing schools. This vision is admirable and coherent.</p> <p>However, there is an apparent lack of a foundation of collaboration and attention to student growth so that the vision is mostly about establishing more fundamental short term goals such as developing an alignment of local curriculum to state standards; training teachers in improved use of MAPs, AIMSweb data, and SLOs; and developing teacher, principal and superintendent evaluation systems. Although these and other goals around professional development and personalized learning are described, there is a distinct lack of specificity in how the LEA's will have the commitment, policies, infrastructure and personnel to realize this "better future."</p> <p>For instance, there is no evidence that the lowest achieving schools (and their achievement gaps and critical needs) have been identified. Personalized Learning Plans, including student portfolios, are part of this application's vision, but this program is in its earliest stages and the application does not indicate a clear vision of how these PLPs will lead to improved student learning &amp;/or close achievement gaps.</p> <p>Overall, the vision statement is compelling, given the challenges of this extremely mostly poor, rural and geographically spread out area in interior Alaska, but the concern remains that more details and specifics are still needed to have this vision stand as clear and credible. For example, in the key area of professional development, the P.D. will be aligned with educator's evaluations as they relate to the four other project areas. This makes sense, but there are no details provided about how this will actually occur.</p>		

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(A) (2)</p> <p>With all schools listed as participating in the RTT-D project, the application states that 56% of students are from low-income families [Introduction to (A)2(a)]. It is not clear in general why the percentage of a village's resident population living in poverty may differ so significantly from the percent of families living in poverty who have children in school. For instance the Tok School is situated in a town of 1,258 with only 10.1% of the total population living in poverty yet 81% of its students are from low income families.</p> <p>On the other hand, other vivid markers of overall poverty are adequately described, including that 70% of the villages have no year-round access to roads, and only 50% of the houses have running water with even fewer having sewage disposal systems. Other negative social markers in the villages are noted, such as the high rate of alcohol abuse and suicide among families, the high rate of early childhood mortality and the high level of anxiety and depression among Alaska Native women. These high rates of poverty, social issues, and personal/community trauma and isolation contribute to low levels of academic achievement, low graduation rates, and chronic absenteeism. By any measure, these are huge challenges for students, families, and schools.</p> <p>Given this information, it is not clear why there has been no targeting of support for the schools with the highest rate of students from low income families. For instance, schools such as the Dot Lake School, Eagle Community School, Tanacross School, Tetlin School and Walter Northway School have 100% of its students coming from low-income families, whereas other schools have less than 50% of its students coming from low income families (for instance Alaska Reach Academy, Andrew K. Demoski School, Minto School, and the Raven Correspondence School).</p> <p>The School Demographic tables list all the schools in the three participating districts since all students and educators in all the schools will participate in the RTT-D projects. The concern is that two schools, the Raven Correspondence School and the Alaska Reach Academy, are both essentially home schools programs. It is not clear whether the total number of educators and students in each of those schools means the total for the regional/state-wide teachers and enrollees, or just the number of those living in the Interior Alaska consortium's districts.</p> <p>For instance the Raven Correspondence School is listed as a participating school with 1,166 enrolled students. It is not clear whether such a home schooling program is a district funded 'school program' or how RTT-D funds would be used to support students and teachers in this context. It is also not clear whether students might be counted in their home school</p>		

demographic profile and at the same time in Raven's school population, i.e. if a student is perhaps taking one or two correspondence courses not available locally in addition to his/her local school enrollment. This is a realistic possibility since the participating schools are all listed as preK-12 or K-12 yet their student populations are as low as ten in Dot Lake School and under twenty in seven other schools -- and it's doubtful that a full array of high school courses in particular could be offered locally. Thus if a given percentage of students enrolled in local schools are also enrolled and counted by the Raven School or the Alaska Reach Academy, this could lead to 'double counting' of some students.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(A) (3) LEA-wide reform and change

The Interior Alaska RT3 project's stated goals include eliminating the achievement gap "between all students and student subgroups" (see "LEA-wide reform & change" overview), certainly an ambitious goal. But given the present low levels of achievement and the large achievement gaps between Native Alaskan students compared to non-Native Alaskan students, it appears to be far from achievable.

This also applies to preparing "all students to graduate college and career ready," which implies a dramatic increase in graduation rates as well as all students graduating college and career ready. The applicant is already including 100% of students in the LEAs for participation, and there is no specific plan described for scaling up any significant "lessons learned" to other schools -- or for the sharing of successful programs, interventions and supports among the schools and districts involved.

This section of the application does not describe the applicant's theory of change for how the grant-funded activities would lead to improved student learning outcomes in the narrative. There is a reference to "the logic model in Appendix 4" which indeed is a matrix of particular activities, inputs, learning, actions, and outcomes -- the basic components of a logic model, but it lacks any description of priorities (other than the considerable weight placed on the goal of all schools achieving a 90% average daily attendance rate) and any differentiation between short and long term goals.

Appendix 4 is quite lengthy so at first glance appears comprehensive; however there is a lack of much-needed specificity under most of the Goals. For example, see the Learnings column under Goal 5, that includes the statement "LEAs will be able to develop strategies to address the needs of each school identified as a lowest achieving school" (p. A-12). Overall, this section of the application provides insufficient evidence of a high quality plan for educational improvement or how such a plan would be specifically implemented in its schools and LEAs.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(A) (4) (a) The goal for reducing the percentage of non-proficient students by one-third as of 2015-2016 appears to be reasonable -- it is not "ambitious" but perhaps achievable. From SY 2010-11 to SY 2011-12, growth was uneven from district to district, sub-group to sub-group. For instance there was an increase in the percentage of students at Proficient or above in Reading from 40% to 46% among the YFSD AK Native students, but a drop from 25% to only 4% among YFSD SPED students in Writing. However, with so many of the schools quite small, changes of just a few students year to year can impact the percentages of those scoring proficient or above on yearly SBAs.

Overall, the goals for the percentage of students scoring proficient and above in SY 2015-2016 represent reasonable but not ambitious goals -- and they present very modest four and five year goals, with gaps still remaining among subgroups. SPED students in particular persistently lag behind other subgroups and up to 32 percentage points behind the overall grades 3-10 in the AGSD, yet there is a lack of information about how these students will be specifically supported to improve their learning and performance.

(A) (4) (b) It is of concern that the Decreasing Achievement Gaps table indicate a gradual closing of the achievement gap between SOA Caucasian Gr. 4 students (in Reading, Writing & Math) and other sub-groups by not projecting any growth for SOA Caucasian/White students, and only projecting growth for students who are AK Native, Low Income, or SPED. Compared with the projected "no growth" among the SOA Caucasian/White students, the gap appears to diminish due to the projected growth of these other groups. However, it is difficult to understand why all the groups except for the Caucasian/White students are projected to substantially improve. It is also questionable whether one group can improve their

SBA scores by as much as 25 percentage points in four years (e.g., Consortium Grade 8 in Reading) yet a sub group in Reading (Consortium AK Native Grade 8 ) is projected in the same time span to only improve by four percentage points. There is no evidence of the reasons for such discrepancies in the projections and such major differences in expectations for different groups does not bode well for equity in the applicants' commitment to decreasing achievement gaps.

(A) (4) (c) The Graduation Rate table is confusing. The SY 2016-27 Post grant year projects the overall districts' graduation rate at 90% as well as 90% for Native American, Economically disadvantaged and SPED sub-groups. These are ambitious and laudatory goals! However, the 'starting points' in SY 2010-11 vary from 0% (YFSD SPED) and 11% (YKSD SPED) to 87% (AGSD Overall) and 89% (AGSC Economically disadvantaged). There is no explanation provided for such widely divergent rates of growth projected for the various groups.

Also, it is not clear why or how some groups changed their graduation rates so dramatically from SY 2010-11 to SY 2011-12. For instance, AGSC SPED went from 0% to 50%, YKSD from 11% to 60% -- whereas YFSD Overall went from 36% to 13% and AGSD Econ. Disadvantaged went from 89% to 66%. With such sharp year to year changes, there is no evidence that overall and sub group graduation rates will dramatically improve from SY 2011 - 12 to SY 2016-17 in a sharply steep linear progression as indicated in the table on Graduation Rates.

(A) (4) (d) The college enrollment rates as outlined in the table are certainly ambitious, though there is little if any reason to believe they are achievable. Most of the Overall groups and various sub-groups are expected to increase the percentage of students enrolling in college from SY 2011-12 to Post Grant SY2016 - 17 by 50 percentage points, +/- . Thus AGSD AK Native Students are expected to increase their college enrollment in those five years from 22% to 72%, AGSC SPED from 0% to 55%, and YKSD Econ. Disadvantaged from 27% to 77%. There is not any narrative to explain the rationale for these projected leaps in college enrollment rates. The SY 2016-2017 college enrollment projections seem particularly unachievable given the high school absentee/non-attendance rates and low graduation rates among many/most sub-groups and the described isolation and high rates of alcohol abuse and poverty among the families of the students in the applicant's LEAs.

Overall, the goals for improved student learning and performance and increased equity as outlined in Section 4 of this application are often ambitious but rarely appear to be achievable.

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:

Track records of success vary from district to district. Consortium member districts have implemented various programs aimed at increasing student achievement. For instance, the AGSD has started preschool programs in three communities, introduced K-12 academic and career counselors in all of its schools, and used independent consultants to conduct ELA and Math instructional audits. An increase in graduation rates are attributed to these changes. YFSD has instituted personalized learning plans, reading mastery programs and increased P.D. In addition YKSD has introduced IRPs, MAP testing, and improved use of data. These changes all hold real promise. However there is no evidence for such programs' specific link to improved student learning outcomes, nor is there evidence of moving beyond 'silos' of improvement to shared best practices across schools or districts.

There is a lack of consistent data in the various graphs and tables though at first glance some of the changes may seem admirable. For instance, the YKSD graduation rate noted in the Figure 8 graph appears to have been flat for three years before an increase of perhaps 30 percentage points between 2009-2010 (about 55%) and 2010-2011 (about 85%); however, this does not match the YKSD overall graduation rate for SY 2010 - 11 of 43% as shown in the earlier Graduation Rate table in section (A)(4)(c). Mathematics SBA scores for YKSD increased very little or actually decreased significantly for SPED students and (presumably) this same SPED cohort in the same time span dropped 10 points in Language Arts.

This section of the application highlights examples of various school and district reform, including AGSD's monetary incentives to promote AYP success, more culturally-based math instruction, hiring of an instructional coach, and targeted attendance monitoring. YFSD now has fewer schools on the state's AYP list; it has increased collaboration time for teachers and has implemented the PEAK model program. The Tetlin School graph shows an increase in its drop out rate, and an improbable change from a "zero percentage" Math SBA for three years to a sudden jump to just under 40%; it is not evident what exactly these percentages represent. It is commendable to see a four year zero drop out rate for the Kaltag School with dramatic

improvement from FY 10 to FY 11 of 30 % in math SBA scores. However, it is not clear how the Allakaket School could go from a zero % graduation rate in FY 2008 to a 100% graduation rate the following year (then drop back down to 70% the following year). The application notes, in reference to the graphs illustrating three of the YKSD four low performing schools' progress, "results can be misleading due to low student numbers." This may be helpful in understanding what otherwise appears to be dramatic dips and spikes in SBA scores and rates for attendance and graduation.

It is a strength that all the LEAs in the Consortium use PowerSchool and AIMS web that can provide educators and parents with current information regarding students' grades, attendance, and assignment completion. All schools also use the state DIASA assessment information system, a tool schools and districts use to look at snapshots of student, school, or district information. Parents among the high percentage of low income families may not have the means or the wi-fi availability to access such resources through the internet, a potentially serious barrier for students as well. This section describes those tools in use but does not describe how they are used to 'inform and improve participation, instruction, and services' other than noting AIMSweb information provides information used in PLCs and for providing a framework for RTI's Tiers of instructional support.

Overall, section (B) (1) provides various examples of how consortium schools are working to implement strategies, programs, and tools that may improve student performance levels. For instance AGSD provides Math in a Cultural Context and hired an Instructional Coach to work with educators in low performing schools and has initiated teacher instructional grants for classroom projects that are "achievement oriented." Schools that had not made AYP were provided with targeted attendance monitoring which increased attendance rates. The drawback is that there appears to be a lack of collaborative effort within and across the three districts to learn from one another so that a more overall collaborative approach could be undertaken to improve student outcomes, high school graduation rates and college enrollment. It is also not clear how the two home schooling schools, Alaska's Reach Academy and the Raven Correspondence School, have been involved in district reforms, particularly in the areas of instruction, curriculum and assessment particularly since they together represent 1,218 students of the 2,190 total participating students (more than 50% of the total). Thus while examples of positive school changes are provided, there is a lack of compelling evidence of the applicant's ability to achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its lowest achieving schools.

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

5

2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In section, there is evidence that the consortium's districts are demonstrating transparency during their annual budget building process by making available school-level expenditures in the designated areas. Budget work sessions are open meetings.

YKSD provides budget information on-line while AGSD and YFSD provide such information through emails and available paper copies. YKSD involves local community school committees, but there is no evidence that this occurs across all the districts' villages. Local Community School Committees are presented with information on the current year budget and the proposed budget for the following year. It is not evident how detailed these budgets might be for such presentations.

While Appendix 5 includes detailed budget information about all AGSD- specific school and district personnel salaries and non-personnel costs, there is no evidence on the availability of transparent budget information about personnel and non-personnel expenditures for the other consortium member districts.

Overall, budget information is generally available in one form or another but it is not clear how specific the budgets might be regarding personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures/ investments.

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

10

7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Alaska appears to provide the applicant consortium (as an authorized regional educational attendance area -- REAA) considerable autonomy and responsibility to develop its own policies, programs, and procedures. REAAs have the legal, statutory, and regulatory autonomy to potentially implement whatever personalized learning environments they may develop.

This section includes existing examples from participating districts of more personalized learning, practices and programs which "have begun to take root" (e.g., they are at the early stages of actual implementation). For instance, AGSD has instituted PLCs, Literacy Blocks, and Individual Career Plans. It also offers correspondence courses at both the high school and college levels; there is no information provided regarding how many students are presently taking such courses or whether they are "paper and pencil" courses or virtual learning courses taken through the internet.

YFSD mandates Individual Student Learning Plans and Personal Career Learning Portfolios at the secondary level and also has once-a-week Early Release to provide PLC time for teachers. YFSD also sponsors the Raven Correspondence School

where all students have Individual Learning Plans. YFSD also sponsors short term (three weeks) career academies that focus on areas such as firefighting, welding, construction and health. These provide students with the opportunity to self select academies and provide them with high school &/or college credits, hands-on experience in professional fields &/or certification in a particular field. There is no information provided about how many students successfully complete these academies or whether such experiences (and the individual career plans) impact high school graduation rates, college applications/acceptance rates, or future work/careers.

Overall, there are indications that there is sufficient flexibility in the state's requirements that there is autonomy for local districts and REAAs to implement personalized learning environments. The state context appears to allow successful conditions for school improvement and reform initiatives. However, there is a lack of evidence about how the state actively supports the strategic and comprehensive development of more personalized learning through state-wide incentives and initiatives. If those do exist, this section of the application does not provide evidence that the REAA is deeply involved.

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

10

6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that students, families, teachers, and principals were involved with the development of this RTT-D application, citing the local involvement in the development of the AGSD's 2010-2014 Strategic Plan which includes the goals of providing personalized learning, using data to drive instruction, maintaining communication with parents and the community, ensuring a positive school climate and implementing appropriate prevention and intervention programs. However, it is not clear how or the extent to which these groups were meaningfully involved (for instance, if and how feedback was incorporated into the Strategic Plan &/or the RTT-D application). There is no information provided about how the other consortium districts involved stakeholders in the development of the proposal. Regarding involvement and support of collective bargaining units, AGSD has a letter of support from its teachers' union, and YKSD "obtained the signature of the local teacher union president." There is no information provided on YFSD's involvement of stakeholders. Appendix 6 does include somewhat more personalized letters of support from the Presidents of the Alaska Gateway Educ. Association, the Mid-Yukon Educ. Association, and the Yukon Koyukuk Administrators Association.

Although these are "boiler plate" letters with the same wording on each one, Appendix 7 does include letters of support for the applicant's RTT-D proposal from the tribal consortium known as the Tanana Chiefs Conference and AGSD's native community and tribal organizations. The YFSD includes letters of support from Beaver Village and the Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich'in Tribal Government. YKSD indicates it has involved local stakeholders and school faculties/staff as well as community and tribal organizations. It is not clear the extent to which the tribal councils/organizations and local communities were involved beyond placing the 'model ('boiler plate') letter' on their various letterheads and signing them. There is a more individualized letter of support from the Tok Center Coordinator at the University of Alaska Fairbanks College of Rural And Community Development's Interior-Aleutians Campus that indicates the importance of the AGSD working more closely with area colleges so that students would be encouraged to have dual enrollment, earning both high school and college credits for their work when appropriate. There is a lack of any letters of support from parent organizations, local civic organizations (other than tribal organizations), or local businesses.

Overall, there is evidence that various tribal and community organizations reviewed the applicant's RTT-D proposal and that letters of support were signed and submitted from some key stakeholder organizations. However, there is only modest evidence that there was meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal or that parent or civic organizations/businesses were actively involved. It is also unclear regarding the extent to which all collective bargaining groups were engaged in substantive and meaningful ways.

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

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

This section makes it clear that there are significant needs in the applicants' districts regarding the creation of more personalized learning environments. The applicants candidly admit that most students are not engaged in actively planning their learning, most teachers are not developing personalized instruction plans, rigorous coursework is typically offered only to college-bound students, students do not track or manage their own learning, and parents are not active partners in student learning.

While there remain huge gaps between the 'current status' and the desired outcomes, this section of the application does offer plans to address each of these areas. However there is a lack of evidence of the various plans' details; rather, they appear to be generic and lacking in specifics (ex: "Develop personalized learning plans for all students"; "Teach students how to use tools and resources to track and manage learning").

This section also briefly outlines the current status, needs and logic behind the plans. However the overall narrative and

templates are quite weak in their analysis and detail of the districts needs and gaps. The applicant districts appear to be well aware of the needs in their schools, but the brevity and lack of specifics do not contribute to a high quality plan.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	11

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes the consortium's plans for the development of Personal Learning Plans (pre-K to 12th grade), Advisories, parent training, and the expectation for more students to have greater access to a variety of more rigorous coursework and deeper learning experiences. Most students live in very small and geographically and culturally isolated communities. Exposure to other cultures and experiences will be centered on three day structured job shadowing, field trips, and job-prep classes in Juneau, the state's capital. While such trips would appear to be valuable for students, they are limited in time and the ability to expose students to other cultural perspectives or significant career exploration learning outside their own rural communities.

To develop essential "skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving," the Interior Alaska RT3 plans to develop social and emotional learning standards and curricula for K-12 students such as LifeSkills Training and perhaps Integrative Youth Development "Phlight Clubs" that develop caring webs of adult support. There is no evidence that there is a commitment to LifeSkills training beyond its present implementation in the YKSD.

The applicant's strategy to meet the C1b expectations rests on the implementation of teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluation systems (with follow-up P.D.), implementing turn-around plans for the lowest achieving schools in each district, and offering more options for career academies and digital learning (such as Digits Math), and expanded access to dual enrollment in college/high school credit courses. These appear to be commendable although modest/ minimal strategies to address the previously outlined and very significant needs in the consortium districts' schools.

For instance, although computer and internet access is apparently inconsistent in the homes of most students, the schools apparently do provide such access -- but there is no mention of the rich potential of virtual learning beyond the Digits Math program, a STEM program focused on just 6th grade classrooms.

"Ongoing and regular feedback" will be provided to students, parents and educators through PowerSchool and PLPs, both of which have the potential to be helpful. The strategies outlined in this section may be useful in developing more personalized learning environments. Many stakeholders, such as low income families living in isolated areas, may not have reliable year-round wi-fi necessary for students and parents to access PowerSchool, on-line courses, and other information-rich internet resources. The RT3 districts will also develop turn-around plans for the lowest achieving schools in each district; it is not evident what time-line and process will be used in the implementation of turn-around plans -- or how students, teachers and families will benefit.

PowerSchool and PLPs are also described as the means to help students track and manage their own learning, along with support from school counselors who will ensure that students are enrolled and attending an advisory period (a rather minimal role for counselors, given the challenges so many students and families face). There is little evidence that the applicant has researched other available options that might be engaging and useful for students.

Overall, the responses to section C1 describe important steps towards developing a more personalized learning environment, but lacks specific evidence of a robust and meaningful plan for truly expanding access to engaging instruction, experiences, and courses that would ensure that all students, especially those with high needs, become successful in their personal lives, college experiences, &/or careers.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	9
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that the consortium's districts will examine the flexibility of instructional models, such as PEAK [Performance Excellence for All Kids] that use student learning objectives. Relevant professional development will be offered to teachers and principals. There is no indication that the PEAK model is presently in use in any of the consortium's schools or that any participating district has experience in developing and assessing student learning objectives. It is challenging work for teachers to develop SLOs that are consistent and rigorous across a school/district. It is not clear that the applicant's has conducted research into models other than PEAK to augment the individual and collective capacity of the teachers and schools

to meet the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching as described in (C) (2) (a) (i - iv).

The applicant intends to implement "business intelligence software" for educators to use for accessing and analyzing student data. They plan to possibly expand their use of NWEA's MAP in order for teachers to access DesCartes tools which have the potential to develop actionable plans for more individualized instruction, differentiation, and grouping. The applicant plans to develop curriculum that is aligned with the state's 2012 college and career ready standards. (Alaska has not adopted the Common Core State Standards, so it is appropriate that the applicant has not cited those standards). Teachers will be using evidence-based tool, resources, and instructional strategies, including rigorous questioning and instructional differentiation. The description of instructional content, assessments and instructional approaches lack specificity (beyond the use of MAP and AIMSweb). The applicant intends to provide teachers with an electronic toolkit similar to the school improvement toolkit developed by Maryland. It is not evident that such a toolkit will provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs.

The applicant intends to use evaluation systems that improve educator effectiveness through specific feedback, improvement plans, and appropriate follow-up professional development. Using the Charlotte Danielson framework, a well-researched and powerful tool, districts plan to develop a tiered system that includes district-wide in-services, the development of grade span and content PLCs, and the provision of coaches who will work with about twenty teachers each year. It is not clear how the district will ensure the implementation of these evaluation and P.D. systems will directly contribute to continuously improving school progress towards the goal of closing achievement gaps.

The applicant intends to refine its educator evaluation systems (beyond the Danielson framework) by including a domain focused on the educator's contribution to student growth and learning. They will use a student growth model as well as data generated from classroom observations and the extent to which teachers effectively personalize their instruction. The addition of a "fifth domain" related to student achievement is an approach that is being implemented in many other districts/states and will help meet guidelines expressed in various federal initiatives. However, the adoption of a framework such as Charlotte Danielson's, and adding a component regarding the educator's contribution to students' growth and achievement, certainly makes sense -- but in itself, even with appropriate professional development for teachers and principals, does not enable the full implementation of personalized learning for all students.

Although the consortium will utilize the federal definitions of effective and highly effective in their rating of teachers and principals, there is no evidence in this section that there is a high quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from such teachers, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas, nor is there convincing evidence of addressing the needs of students who are either struggling academically or those students who have easily mastered the core instructional program.

Overall, the applicant has reasonable plans for somewhat limited early steps to improve teaching. There is less attention to the professional development of principals, though in these very small schools the principal is also a teacher. However, these steps are not sufficient to fully meet the criteria for a high quality plan listed in the sections and sub-sections of (C) (2). It is also not clear if the vision and plans for improvement in teaching and leading are those of just the AGSD or have been collaboratively developed and are fully supported by all three districts in the consortium.

#### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8

##### (D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Currently none of the applicants' LEAs have established comprehensive district-wide policies and procedures to facilitate personalized learning within their schools. Such policies are intended to be developed and then finalized by August 2013.

The LEAs' central offices are described as having strong infrastructure and communication systems to support their isolated rural schools. School leadership teams do not currently exist but the LEAs intend to create autonomous teams by September, 2013. Although students within each LEA can earn credit based on mastery "few, if any, students have been aware of the possibility or attempted or been able to do so."

It is the intent of the applicant to give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways by January, 2014. The commitment to provide (by March 2013) learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students is grounded in the use of IEPs for SPED students as well as the implementation of PEAK and PLCs. Policies are needed to express the districts' school board's expectations and support for a variety of initiatives in this regard.

This section of the application is lacking in evidence that it meets the basic criteria stated for this section, e.g., "the applicant has practices, policies and rules that facilitate personalized learning..." Overall the applicant's plan reflects their intent to develop the policies and practices that facilitate personalized learning [as described in (D) (1) (a) through (e)] for more personalized learning, but consortium-wide practices and supportive policies are inconsistent, weak or non-existent in most areas.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

LEA and school infrastructure to support personalized learning is presently weak. Although each school currently makes considerable efforts to provide necessary content, tools and other learning resources to support personalized learning, these are limited. Outdated computers are provided to families who can't afford computers (although if these are no longer useful at school, they are probably less than useful in homes). YKSD opens up each school's computer labs to community members on designated days outside of school hours, but there is no information about how many parents and others utilize this resource.

One school, Tok, provides iPads to students in grades 3-8. If granted RTT-D funds, the LEAs intend to provide laptops for all high risk students by September 2013. Providing appropriate technology and technical support to facilitate personalized learning at home is impeded by many homes lacking reliable internet access, especially in the YKSD. Similarly, home access to student information data systems such as PowerSchool will be available for parents and students by December, 2013, but home access may be difficult or impossible for many families. AIMSweb, DIASA, and MAP will be in place across all the participating LEAs by June 2014.

Overall, school infrastructures are presently limited in functionality and universality of access. There are plans to expand certain components, but the IT systems and resources for the implementation of the applicant's plan may well remain limited for many students and families.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(E) (1) The qualitative evaluation questions posed in each project area provide a good start for monitoring progress in the early stages of projects' implementation. There is a plan for the RT3 Project Director, the Data Project Manager and the P.D. Project Manager to work with superintendents and the "evaluation workgroup" (members unspecified) to monitor and evaluate implementation and to make adjustments as needed.

However, there is little evidence of a plan to monitor and assess the impact of the application's RTT-D investments or the timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals. The open-ended questions posed are often "Yes/No" or "What/When/Who" types of questions, for example "When did coaching begin? Who participated?; When did Professional Learning Communities begin? Who participated...? What student training has been provided?/When?/Who attended?" Such questions are necessary but not sufficient to provide helpful, in-depth information to Project Administrators and Superintendents regarding possible needs for rigorous continuous improvement.

That is, from the process outlined, administrators will know more about the extent to which the projects' time-lines are adhered to by members of the consortium. On the other hand, they may learn much less about the overall impact of the investments -- and the possible need for ongoing corrections and improvements, especially during but also after the term of the RTT-D grant. This applies to areas such as the professional development, technology, and staff effectiveness.

For instance, there is no evidence that data will be monitored, measured, and publicly shared regarding the impact on students' attendance, engagement, achievement, graduation rates, and overall readiness for future college/careers. While the real impact may not be known until after the grant funding has ended, there is no evidence of a plan for interim impact assessments (for instance through student/teacher/parent surveys) during the project period itself. There is also little information in this section to indicate that information generated by the outlined plan will be shared beyond the LEA superintendents and boards, project manager administrators, and (by implication) the RT3 Community committees.

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(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's response briefly describes a commitment to regular, consistent reporting to LEA superintendents and boards of education, Community School Committee meetings, the Alaska DEED and other LEA's throughout the state.

However, there is no evidence that the communication plan includes opportunities for engagement or feed-back with internal and external stakeholders or that any such response might contribute to adjustments and revisions of the RTT-D projects during implementation.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Although the templates are completed with numbers and percentages, it appears that these are somewhat arbitrary as there is a consistent percentage of effective/highly effective teachers and principals from year to year without any differentiation in sub-groups percentages.

For instance of 20% of all AGSD, YFSD and YKSD participating students and those in subgroups SY 2012-23 have highly effective teachers/principals and four years later 60% are projected to have highly effective teachers/principals. Similarly 50% of those students start off in SY 2012-13 with effective teachers/principals and it is universally projected that 90% of those students will have effective teachers/principals in SY 2016-17. These are ambitious goals; however there is little compelling evidence in the overall plan that they are achievable.

This section also includes performance measures describing the goals of an overall reduction by one-third the percentage of various grade cohorts and students in different subgroups who score below the proficient range on the state's spring SBA reading and math assessments. Although the criteria is a "reduction" of non-proficient students, the tables actually show increases in every category throughout the years from SY 2011-2012 to SY 2016-2017, presumably referring to the "flip side" of the increase in the percentage of students who demonstrate proficiency in reading and math on yearly SBAs.

Although there is a stated commitment to review the yearly SBA reports for students, schools, and districts, there is no evidence of specific "supplemental strategies" to improve the SBA measure (since it appears to be in the hands of the state).

The consortium plans to use the GOLD Social and Emotional Learning assessment for preK-3, focusing on the percentage of students who meet or exceed expectations for participating cooperatively and constructively in group settings; the goal of 90% in SY 2016-17 is ambitious but difficult to know if it is achievable since there is no baseline data available. Another goal is to increase daily attendance as an indicator of being on track to college and career readiness. The rationale is solid: "Absenteeism, cutting classes, and truancy are all highly correlated with students dropping out of school," although only absenteeism will be tracked by this stated performance measure. The gains from baseline to post grant years appear to be ambitious and perhaps achievable.

There is information missing in the next table's left hand column; the table appears to be looking at increasing the percentage of students who are proficient or higher in math on the yearly SBAs. Subsequent tables look at performance measures such as students demonstrating improvement in social and emotional learning on the School Climate and Connectedness Survey, the # and % of students completing the FAFSA forms, the success rate of high school students in the required English and Math courses, and the percentage of students completing a rigorous high school college/career ready course of study. Perhaps most significant is that even by SY 2016-17, only 25% to 60% of students are projected to be on track for successfully completing college/career high school courses (achievable but hardly ambitious). There is again information missing in the left hand column of the last table in this section so the reader is unable to determine the performance measure referred to for this measure of social and emotional learning for high school students.

Overall, the performance measures selected are perhaps adequate for this area of isolated schools/LEAs, but limited in their rigor, timeliness, and their utility in providing the applicant and stakeholders with comprehensive formative information to understand and monitor implementation progress.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This section includes qualitative questions concerning the implementation of RTT-D supported tools, materials, and activities. Appendix 12 includes a short list of data collection tools to respond to general questions that relate to the project's four components; these will be utilized through quarterly random samples of teachers, students and parents. In the small schools, a random sample of such low numbers of students/teachers/parents may be unrepresentative of the overall population of those groups.

The analysis of data generated through interviews is described as "longitudinal changes over time"; there is no evidence of the approach or techniques that will be used in the analysis or its final form.

There is evidence of the districts' ability to assess the extent to which educators improve their practices if and when the YKSD teacher evaluation system described in Appendix 9 is adopted and implemented throughout the consortium.

There is no evidence in this section of an overall plan to more productively use time, staff, money, or other resources to improve personal learning environments/results.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The overall project budget appears reasonable in its projected use of RTT-D funds; it is more difficult to evaluate its sufficiency since there are as many project administrators (five managers, a tech. district-level infrastructure specialist, and a project director) as there are those funded to provide direct support to those working in schools (three personalized learning specialists and three professional development coaches). There are considerable funds budgeted for travel to and from school sites and for principals and superintendents -- but unfortunately no teachers -- to visit 'model schools' in Alaska and other states. Because of the extreme rural nature of the area and the lack of year-round road access, most travel is by plane. However, there appears to be very limited if any projected funding or use of technology-supported virtual meetings and/or virtual coaching with video taped samples of classroom instruction by local teachers.</p> <p>\$3,000./year stipends for teachers, principals and superintends to participate in the various consortium level teams and workgroups appears to be overbudgeted since a) these may take place on days when these educators are already being paid by local contract, and b) superintendents and principals in particular may well serve on a variety of teams and workgroups and thus earn multiple stipends for work that is in reality part of their overall job responsibilities. There is a lack of information about how often or when such meetings would take place.</p> <p>Other areas that appear overbudgeted: 1) \$100,000. seems high for the first year year of a contract for the purchase of web-based software for teachers to access and analyze student data; 2) \$360,000. over four years of a contracted evaluation also seems high since the project components are not complex; 3) \$200,000. over four years for a contracted vendor to align [proprietary] MAPs and AIMSWeb formative assessments to the new Alaska college and career ready standards; also it is not clear what changes/adaptations/modifications the vendor will have the authority to do or the specific nature of the vendor's activities; 4) \$200,000 over four years for a contracted vendor to purchase or develop a web based teacher toolkit of resources aligned with the Alaska college-and-career standards; there are already existing state and CCSS resources that are free on the internet or could be purchased and modified for a more modest cost.</p> <p>Other areas may be underbudgeted: 1) There is no evidence in the budget for funds to pay substitute teachers when they are away from their classrooms for trainings, team meetings and project-related professional development; 2) In the interest of equity, it would seem reasonable to purchase laptops for all students not just those who are at high-risk (which could avoid stigmatizing of students who are low achieving &amp;/or from low income or high need families). This would involve the purchase of another 650 laptops or iPads which could then be used for all class instructional activities that could be appropriately differentiated depending on the needs, abilities, and interests of the students; 3) There is little evidence of interest in investing in internet-based professional development such as PD360, ASCD's EduCore &amp; PD InFocus, and other such tools; 4) Although these are mentioned in the job descriptions of the Personalized Learning Environment and Personalized Education project managers, there is a lack of specified RTT-D funds budgeted for the education and support of students' families so that they can become more engaged in helping their children become college and career ready.</p> <p>There is a noticeable absence of any funds from <u>non</u>-RTT-D sources to support the various projects. This is a significant weakness and does not support the goal of engaging external stakeholders and long term sustainability.</p> <p>Overall, the budget appears justified but very limited in its ability to ensure long-term sustainability beyond RTT-D funding.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

There is a lack of evidence for on-going post-RTT-D funding for leadership and financial support from State and local government leaders. However, as stated in the applicant's Sustainability narrative paragraph, the project will provide resources to the consortium's LEAs and schools that have the potential to be on-going.

These include alignment of the curriculum and assessments to Alaska's college and career ready standards; software for analyzing and utilizing student data; an educator evaluation system that will include student growth as one measurement of effectiveness; a web-based 'teacher toolkit'; web-based tools for developing Personalized Learning Plans; and effective/highly effective teachers and administrators who are able to provide a personalized learning environment for all students.

Overall, sustainability is desired by the participating districts, and some elements of the RTT-D projects have the potential for lasting impact. However there is a lack of evidence in post grant budget assumptions, potential sources, and uses of funds.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: N/A  There is no evidence that the applicant has submitted a competitive preference priority.		

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Absolute Priority 1: The Interior Alaska RT3 application does not meet the Absolute Priority 1 criteria. The applicant envisions a multitude of improvements to help personalize students' learning environments, choices, and supports; it certainly wants to have all students in all the districts' schools to attend school more regularly, be on grade level for reading and math, and to graduate college/career ready. However there is not yet a consistent base of initiatives across the participating schools/districts, nor an evident foundation of sharing best practices or collaborative planning. The applicant envisions more technology, more aligned curriculum, more effective/highly effective teachers, better use of data, and more extensive professional development -- all in the hopes of improved student outcomes. However, with the lack of a previous functional cooperative/collaborative infrastructure among the members of the consortium, there is a wide range of different attempts to accelerate learning. There is also a lack of evidence of cooperative efforts with external stakeholders such as health and social service agencies to counteract the effects of poverty, alcohol abuse, a high rate of depression and suicide, and extreme geographical and cultural isolation.</p> <p>The consortium appears eager to move forward and more effectively address the core educational assurance areas. The districts' leadership wants to create more personalized learning environments, improve teaching and learning, decrease achievement gaps, and have all its students graduate from high school to successfully move on to college or careers. There are examples of various programs and activities that provide hope in this regard. But the overarching concern is that instead of a coherent and comprehensive plan, there are instead many fragmented "pieces of the puzzle." There is also a lack of a successful history of these member schools and districts working together towards a shared vision and the steps necessary to make this vision a reality.</p>		

Total	210	93
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0394AK-3 for Yukon-Koyukuk School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The strategies the applicant presents for implementation of the project are aligned with the State of Alaska's new college and career ready standards. Teachers and principals will receive professional development in supporting, mentoring, and evaluating their workforce on standards and common assessments, policies, tools, data and resources effective classroom instruction to the new state standards. The applicant will develop data systems to provide immediate access to student data, monitor student progress, identify effective teachers and teaching practices and inform decision-making at the classroom, school and system level.</p> <p>Weakness: The applicant has indicated that the State is currently implementing individual learning plans, however there are no specifics presented to show that the current approach has improved student achievement. There is no information presented regarding how the current or proposed project will deepen student learning. The applicant would like to expand the current individual learning plan program throughout the district, however no specifics are provided. The applicant does not describe how the proposed activities will incorporate student academic interests.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Based upon the information provided clearly indicates that there is a need to provide support for the targeted schools and population identified. The applicant has chosen schools that are considered low performing schools and where 56% of the students are low income. The applicant provides extensive information regarding the demographics of the targeted area such as the median income and the ethnic breakdown of the population. Furthermore, the needs identified include a lack of educational resources, lack of technology and access to public transportation due to the rural areas where most of its students reside. The applicant successfully identifies the student population and schools through a list provided in the grant proposal. The total number of students to be served by the project is presented which totals 2,190 and 100% of the students are considered low income/high needs students. A total of 163 educators will also work with the project to support program goals and activities.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The strategy the applicant presents will support the program outcome goals within the target schools. For example, the plan to increase the use of educational technology is outlined and the goal is to provide services for high risk subgroups of students and parents. Students and parents will have access to performance data to support student learning and monitor progress. Additionally, there are strategies presented that will support professional development to assist teachers, principal and superintendents which includes in-services and one-on-one coaching. The applicant proposes to develop a teacher/superintendent evaluation system that supports the student growth model and uses student achievement to create individualized classroom instruction.</p> <p>Weakness: The applicant does not specifically indicate how the strategies proposed will lead to meaningful reform district wide and there is not a scale-up approach clearly outlined.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents reasonable information indicating that the project will support student learning and performance. There is detailed information to show that there are sufficient systems in place that will effectively provide summative assessments</p>		

for the project and will help to decrease the achievement gap. Benchmarks of improvement for the district and schools will focus on on-time graduation, full accreditation and a climate of support. There are methods in place to ensure tracking of student progress and the data collection process will include evaluation of curriculum management, teacher quality, parental involvement and provide support for student personalized instruction. This tracking process will monitor progress and provide consistent feedback regarding the program. Furthermore, the system will allow educators to personalize their own performance improvement plans and create professional development opportunities. The specific goals presented by the applicant are ambitious and attainable based upon the aforementioned systems in place and include: increasing the graduation rate from 87% to 90% by year 2016-17 and increase the college graduation rate from 75% to 100% by years 2016-17.

**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
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a) There is evidence presented by the applicant to show there has been advancement in student achievement in the targeted area over the last four years. For example, the school district created three preschool programs in communities that were without them, K-12 academic and career counselors were introduced to all the schools within the district and independent consultants conducted a math and literacy audit which helped to increase the graduation rate in low performing schools.</p> <p>b) The information the applicant provides clearly indicates that there has been success in providing reform for four low performing schools within the target area. The strategies the applicant implemented were innovative and resulted in at least one of the schools making AYP; a school that had never made AYP before. Strategies included offering monetary incentives to promote AYP success, providing cultural-based instruction in Math and hiring an Instructional Coach who worked with staff and funds from grants were used for teachers to initiate achievement projects in the classroom.</p> <p>c) The plan to ensure student data is available is sufficient. The district provides performance data which is made available to students, parents and stakeholders. The state website is accessible and provides real-time grades, attendance and other pertinent information related to school achievement. Mechanisms are innovative and in place to support teaching staff. The Professional Learning Communities (PLC) provided early release time for teachers enabling them to time to develop lesson plans and collaborate with other colleagues and the Monitoring Academics Program (MAP) provided formative results of student achievement in core subject matters.</p> <p>Weakness: a) The applicant does not provide any information regarding the advancement of student learning, achievement and increasing equity improvements over the last four years regarding college enrollment. The chart presented to show the graduation rate is not specific to population and no information provided to indicate a successful track reward. b) The applicant does not provide any baseline data to support the charts indicating the current graduation rate. The applicant presents to show academic success in the targeted areas.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a) The applicant provides information indicating that the salaries for all staff and program related information is made available to all stakeholders, parents and general public. The budget is made available annually at school meetings and anyone may attend the meeting and provide budget input. The applicant provides the actual salaries for all staff for each school within the consortium.</p>		

- b) The actual personnel salaries for instructional staff for each school within the consortium is provided by the applicant.
- c) The applicant provides personnel salaries for teachers in each of the schools within the consortium is provided by the applicant.
- d) The applicant provides non-personnel expenditures for each of the schools within the consortium.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:  
 The State is responsible for the overall supervision of the schools district-wide and the local board is responsible for overseeing the day to day operations of the schools. The model the applicant proposes to use is mirrored after a State model program created to provide academic assistance to students during school hours. The State model was the result of a needs assessment conducted and resulted in the initiative being implemented throughout the state. The applicant has demonstrated successful programming and sufficient autonomy as related to the State legal, statutory and regulatory requirements.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:  
 The applicant provides information to show that there is support for the project as evidenced through letters of support from Tribal Organizations and consortium members, the board of education and the Community School Committee which is made up of parents and/or relatives in the community. The CSC committee is vital to the project because it represents the interest of the community and provides input to the School Board and administration. Each LEA consortium has involved community members, parents, students, teachers and educators in the development of the proposal and a strategic plan was developed based upon the State performance measures. The applicant presents reasonable plan to implement the project region wide. The project will utilize innovative strategies to be used by consortium members to implement personalized instruction to students. Strategies include: delivering standards based instruction based upon the students needs, use of online adaptive learning strategies such as blended learning opportunities and addressing equity of opportunity for students especially the underserved population. Students will be offered a variety of academic choices through innovative school models. The applicant proposes to expand technology access throughout the region to promote moving to competency vs. seat time in school thereby maximizing personalization in areas of academic instruction.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:  
 The applicant has indicated that there is a lack of active learning and planning by students and no creation of individual instruction plans. Additionally, opportunities for college and career ready courses are limited and parents are not active in their students learning process. The applicant offers strategies to address the lack of college and career ready courses by revising their current curriculum to align with State standards so that all students are privy to educational opportunities that support college and career readiness.  
  
 Weakness: The applicant provides information indicating the need and gaps of the targeted area, however there is no specific strategies presented to address the needs identified. For example, the applicant states that there is a lack of parental involvement and no opportunities for the creation of individual instruction plans for students, however no specific plans are presented to show how the applicant will address the needs.

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

	Available	Score
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(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>C. ai) The applicant provides ample information to show efforts will be made to ensure students will participate in the development of their Personal Learning Plan (PLP) through support from parents and teachers. Parents will receive quarterly training to assist students with the process and a computer lab will be provided to ensure accessibility to the online training and access to the students plans.ii) The use of learning and developmental goals are defined by the applicant and will effectively support the process. For example, the plan will be placed online and will be made accessible to all stakeholders. Additionally, links to higher education, workforce and curriculum resources will also be made accessible. iii) Opportunities for deep learning experiences are identified and will be made accessible to students. Courses include personal development, personality, learning style assessments and portfolios.iv) The applicant will make every effort to provide culturally diverse activities; the applicant proposes to provide learning experiences at the State capitol and students will participate in real world experiences at a variety of workshops. v) Students will be provided opportunities for gaining life skills that will address behavioral skills and self esteem, decision making and communication skills will be offered at both the elementary and middle school level.</p> <p>C. b) i) &amp; ii) The applicant proposes to provide evaluation systems for teachers, principals and superintendents to assess classroom instruction and strategies whereby they will be able to provide personalized services for students. Additionally, student progress will be monitored and all records will be made accessible for review, this process will ensure students are on schedule to graduate. iii) The strategies the applicant proposes to use to implement digital curriculum programs for all grade levels will help to decrease the acheivement gap. Programs will include the use of Digital Math to provide grade level instruction and Career Academies will be expanded to accelerate student learning and college courses which will be aligned with the local university. Additonally, the applicant will create a searchable toolkit curriculum that will be aligned with college and career standards. iv) Performance information and assessments will made available to parents and teachers through the state educational database.</p> <p>B. The applicants plan to provide personalized instruction based upon students current knowledge and skills is feasible and includes the use of standard achievement, instructional approaches and content. Special education teachers will be a part of the personalized learning team for special needs students.c) Students will have the opportunity be trained during the school day and online, counselor will track student progress.Students will have access to computers at school and be able to gain training from teachers.</p> <p>Weakness: C1 b-ii) The plan the applicant presents to support low achieving schools lacks specificity and does not provide detailed information to gain knowledge of the plan to be implemented.</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The process the applicant describes indicating that there are plans in place to provide strategies for teachers and educators to improve instruction and increase student achievement is described and feasible for the project. The State and Consortium are aligned with federal assurances and requirements. To ensure there is accountability amongst educators a teacher and principal evaluation systems is in place. There is sufficient information to show that the evaluation process is comprehensive with emphasis on professional development and student achievement. The plan to improve educator skills and abilities will make sure teachers and educators are capable of implementing personalized learning environments in high poverty schools. Ample support will be provided through The Teaching and Leading Investment Fund which will advance teachers and principal education by building content knowledge with high priority teaching in the areas of math, science and ELL instruction; the use of this strategy will provide educators effective methods of program implementation and improve teacher quality. Overall, the plan the applicant presents will improve the teaching and learning process and provide continuous feedback to ensure students are successful.</p> <p>Weakness: The applicant does not provide any specific information regarding strategies to ensure the process will increase the numbers of students who receive instruction in hard to staff schools and speciality areas.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

- a) The LEA offices will provide support and resources for the project. All of the offices are located in the target communities.
- b) Community School Committees and each consortium member will be responsible for the autonomy of the project and implementation of the project. The applicant will establish leadership teams once the grant is funded and the Community School Committees will be formed.
- c) Although there is no policies or guidelines currently in place for promotion or credit earned the applicant indicates that there will be steps made toward this goal by 2013 and the LEA will support the strategy and inform all stakeholders of the process. The applicant provides a chart indicating the timeline, persons responsible, activities and deliverables that will support the plan.
- d) There is no policy or guideline currently in place to demonstrate mastery standards. The applicant indicates that there will be steps made toward this goal by 2013 and the LEA will support the strategy and inform all stakeholders of the process. The applicant provides a chart indicating the timeline, persons responsible, activities and deliverables that will support the plan,
- e) All students receive an Individual Education Plan designed with additional support system and assistance to ensure their needs are met. The LEAs will have policies and programs in place and will ensure learning resources are adaptable and accessible to the student. The applicant will ensure students will receive appropriate services to support their individual needs.

Weakness: a) Although the district offices are located in rural areas, the applicant does not identify a central office as the lead office for the project. There is no organizational chart provided to show the governing structure for the project. b) There are no leadership teams associated with the project as indicated by the the applicant. c-d) The plan the applicant proposes is limited because currently the services are not provided.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- a) The applicant provides sufficient information to show that all efforts are made to provide services to all students and their families regardless as to their income. Resources are offered inside and outside of school time to support student achievement. For example, outdated computers are given to families who can't afford them by the LEA's and by June 2013, parents will have access to a new computer lab to use one night per week.
- b) The applicant provides ample evidence to show that efforts will be made to provide appropriate levels of technical support. All stakeholders will be provided with access to technology to assist with the personalized learning process. Peer mentor support networks will be created and links to online technology will be provided and district support will be made available to parents and students.
- c) The plan to provide technology support for purposes of export and access is logically presented by the applicant. Information technology systems will be provided to support all stakeholders including parents and students so that they will be able to export information regarding student progress. The use of the state website provides access to all student, district and school wide data.

Weakness-d. The applicant's information system is not inter operable and and cannot support finance, human resources and payroll data at this time. The applicant does not anticipate this process occurring until the year 2014.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There is sufficient information provided to show that there is a plan in place to provide feedback regarding program progress and improvements if needed. The plan will ensure continuous improvement to support student achievement and teacher quality. The process evaluation will be used throughout the project and program strategies will be monitored. The Project Director will be responsible for program monitoring an evaluation of the process and the Data Project Manager and Professional Development Project Manager will assist with the process. Consortium members will meet quarterly; this process will present opportunities to share program success, review program assessment results and program concerns. *Weakness:* The applicant does not provide the frequency of data collection of the dissemination of the report to community stakeholders.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proposes to provide quarterly reports to all stakeholders. The Community Network Committee comprised of community and family members will provide feedback to the parents program.</p> <p>Weakness: There is little or no information provided in this section of the proposal. More information is needed to show there is a plan in place.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The overall indicators provided by the applicant are based upon the academic ability of the students in the targeted area and state and district standards. All results are provided to teachers, administrators, parents and students. The baseline data, subgroups and goals for each target area is defined and provided by the applicant. The goals the applicant presents are ambitious and achievable and exceed or meet the States standards. For example, the 2010-2011 baseline data for reading grades 3-10 was 67% and the applicant proposes to increase the rate to 78% by the year 2016-17. The applicant has provided information of all subgroups to be served by the project and continuous monitoring of student performance will identify whether current measures are deemed sufficient. The processes the applicant has provided will help to ensure that student progress is aligned with their academic goals and personal learning plan thus making them college and career ready.</p> <p>Weakness: The applicant does not provide any baseline data for teachers or principals who will work with the project, therefore it is not clear if the goals presented by the applicant is achievable.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides strategies that will evaluate the effectiveness of the grant and activities provided by the project. The applicant will evaluate the use of resources provided to educators who are associated with the project, student participation in developing personalized plans, teacher quality and parent participation. There are ample measurement tools presented to support the evaluation process that include student records, interviews, surveys and other school data. The applicant provides a timeline to track the evaluation process that includes the data collection tools, evaluation questions and analysis.</p> <p>Weakness: The applicant does not provide information to indicate if the findings from the evaluation will be disseminated to stakeholders and it not clear who will be responsible for implementing the evaluation process.</p>		

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> <p>a) The applicant presents a budget that identifies all funding that will support the project and has included funds from the Race To The Top- District grant and LEA, State and other funds that will support the project.</p> <p>b) The applicant proposes to serve over over 2100 students in 3 schools addition to teachers within the district. Funds will be use to provide student and school wide technology to support individualized instruction and professional development.</p> <p>c) A complete description of all funds both external and internal which will support the project is described in the budget and budget narrative and are sufficient based upon the project described by the applicant. Also included are estimated expenditures for each line item and the budget reflects 4-year cost to be used throughout the duration of the grant. Additionally, the applicant has identified funds that will be used from Title I &amp; Title I School Improvement , IDEA and General State funds which total \$2, 500,000 to support the project.</p> <p>Weakness: The applicant does not provide computations for all of the budget time expenditures listed. For example, the</p>		

applicant the applicant request \$150,000 for contractual purposes, however it is not clear how the cost was calculated.

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

10

5

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides information regarding the plan to sustain the project after the funds have ended. The use of Investment Funds will support the project after funds end. The fund will support certain portions of the grant proposal such as increase career awareness (STEM based opportunities), middle and high school counseling and advising, PreK teaming approach and data and college board assessments. Weakness: The sustainability plan is limited and it is not clear how the program will be supported after funding has ended. It is not clear how the Aligned Funders Group, a group consisting of private and public funders associated with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will support the group with the sustainability process other than provide strategic guidance as indicated by the applicant. Furthermore, the applicant states that State funds will be provided to support the project between \$2-4 billion dollars, however there are no specific funding sources presented.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The evidence the applicant provides indicates that there are partnerships currently in place through the collaborative efforts of a consortium and Tribal Elders. The Tribal Elders and community organizations helped develop the proposal. Parental involvement is evidenced and parents will be afforded opportunities to support the project by assisting in the schools and becoming members of the Community School Partnership Committee. The applicant has provided evidence of 10-population level educational results for students within the target area. For example, Community School Partners will help to provide support to Tribal Elders, parents, community partners and students and they will also serve as active members in the LEA's to help create policy and program support. Each LEA will provide oversight, training and support to teachers, principals and other stakeholders involved with the project. The applicant successfully identifies performance measures for all grades to be served by the project. The project will be implemented in 3 rural areas in Washington.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's proposed project meets the Absolute Priority 1 requirement based upon the proposed project presented. Services to be provided to promote personalized learning environments that includes access to technology and the creation of student portfolios at all grade levels. Students will be able to join the workforce as a form of mentorship in order to gain real world experiences. The project addresses the four core educational reform areas by providing services that will support student and teacher success. The district has created new core standard assessments to be used to track student success. Students, parents and all stakeholders will be able to access frequent information regarding student progress.

Total	210	164
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