Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0080KY-1 for Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant received a perfect score by articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision, as well as detailing significant progress and how they will build on the core educational assurance areas targeted by this program. The applicant has adopted standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy. For example, the applicant notes that as early as grade-3 parents are informed through an assessment system if their child is making progress consistent with college and career readiness. The applicant has detailed their approach to building data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction. For example, the regional data warehouse utilizes an "open house" data system. The applicant details building off of a robust data system. The applicant builds on data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals, by developing a regional data warehouse that will utilize a state Department of Education "Open House" data system. This system includes 125 data sets and 124 reports from student achievement to ACT results. The system also includes school and district report cards, district profiles, assessments, learning environment information, non-academic data, graduation rates, accountability, and other information. The applicant will build off this with RTTD by using multiple analysis processes to inform instruction. The applicant has detailed an approach to recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most. For example, the applicant has worked with Teach for America to attract teachers to hard to staff schools. The applicant has focused on turning around low-achieving schools. For example, the applicant's plan has identified two tiers for low-performing schools. The applicant has clear criteria for designating low performing schools. And identified specific supports to guide this schools in the reform process.

Regarding the goal of of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity, the applicant details significant gains, even though there is significant poverty in a rural region. As mentioned, all four of the core educational assurance areas as defined by the notice are adequately detailed in the proposal, and the applicant has adequately detailed how they will build from previous efforts. Examples include building off of previous implementation of an educational measurement system implemented through the legislature which is used to determine school and district performance, a college and career readiness testing system, a professional development for teachers and supervisors, an online database for identifying unique talents, and other factors. The applicant has detailed the deepening of student learning and increases in equity through personalized support for the development of an Appalachian Renaissance Initiative detailed in the proposal. The applicant has articulated clear and credible goals related to student achievement, and increasing equity through personalized supports. For example, the vision related to this initiative involves personalized learning environments, next generation classrooms, accessible data systems, effective teachers and leaders, and college and career readiness. The approach to these goals was adequately detailed throughout the proposal. The applicant has a comprehensive and coherent reform vision, and describes what classroom experiences will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. The classroom experiences for students and teachers participating in personalized learning might involve a team of students in a technology lab has replaced the teacher's desk in order to make room for a stable platform they have built to support a laser measurement device so that it can make very precise measurements. Another example includes a group of history students are engaged in a challenging, but very well informed debate with a team from another school in via interactive video teleconferencing equipment. The applicant gives many examples like these to describe personalized learning. The applicant is somewhat necessarily vague, as personalized learning needs to be adapted to students' interests. However, because of the vivid detail, specificity, and coherence with the specified intention of this program the applicant received the high score in this section of the proposal.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant reports selecting schools and districts based on their commitment and readiness to provide students with a high quality education and engage in innovative strategies related to academic achievement, graduation rates, and increasing college and career success. The application development process included surveys of students, teachers, parents, and community members.

The applicant provided a detailed description of the process used to select schools to participate, and provided a detailed list of the schools that will participate in grant activities. The applicant provided the total number of participating students, and the number of participating students from low-income families. The applicant specified the exact number of participating students who are high-need students. The applicant also provided the number of participating educators.

The applicant received full points for this section by detailing a comprehensive and coherent approach to implementation. For example, the applicant provided a specific description of the process utilized in selecting participating schools. In addition, the applicant specified, with data listed that participating schools meet or exceed the competition's eligibility requirements. In addition, the applicant states that selection was also based on a commitment and readiness to provide students with high quality education, and willingness to engage in innovative strategies related to academic achievement. This section of the proposal was further enhanced by indicating steps the existing consortium is made, including collection of survey data, engagement of teachers, parents, and community members, public forums on personalized education, and other factors related to the formation of a plan in line with the goals of this competition. The applicant provided a table listing the participating schools. The applicant has also provided sufficient detail on the number of students served, with the disaggregation of this data. The applicant has identified a number of high need students as defined by the notice, and the number of participating educators as defined by the notice. The applicant received a top score in this section of the proposal for providing the necessary specificity, and enhance this section of the proposal by providing the rationale for selection, as well as by detailing the steps made by the formation of the consortium. The applicant has a high quality plan that includes a rationale for activities, timelines, deliverables, and the persons responsible for implementation.

The project will serve 42,256 students in 101 schools throughout 17 districts, where 32,290 or 77 percent of students are from low-income families based on eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch subsidies. The applicant reports that a significant portion of our participating students meets other high-need indicators. For example: fifteen of the seventeen districts in this consortium representing 40,731 students or 98 percent are LEAs eligible for the 2012 Rural Low Income Schools Program, the two remaining districts have a poverty rate of 47.2% and poverty rate of 34.9%.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant details five projects to achieve the goals and vision of this initiative including personalized learning environments, next-generation classrooms, accessible data systems, effective teachers and leaders, and college and career readiness. The applicant has provided a high-quality, coherent and comprehensive plan. For example, the applicant has provided a detailed logic model as attachment included in the appendix, as well as implementation measures detailed in attachment-H of the appendix. The applicant has provided details on collaboration with partners in higher education. The applicant has also provided very vivid examples, and specific examples of the types of programs and initiatives implemented in the interest of districtwide reform and change. The logic models make the plan appear well thought out, and the examples make it appear feasible.

The applicant has provided a high-quality plan that includes coherent and comprehensive descriptions of how the proposed project will be scaled and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools. In relation to this, as mentioned the applicant has provided goals and visions for the initiative which include personalized learning environments, next-generation classrooms, accessible data systems, effective teachers and leaders, and college and career readiness. The applicant has provided a logic model, and a fidelity of implementation measures chart included in the appendix to help scale these reforms. The applicant has detailed a plan for cross district collaboration, virtual learning opportunities and a distance-learning network that is consistent with the intentions of this competition, and promising based on the rationale provided in the proposal. The applicant has aligned its proposed project with statewide reform initiatives, and introduced enhancements to these initiatives. The applicant has adequately detailed parent/guardian engagement in this section of the proposal as well as a community-based problem-solving methodology, mentoring, postsecondary opportunities, and other factors. The applicant has provided explicit details on student learning, and a comprehensive plan. For example, the applicant has provided details on the formation of a regional student senate program, and regional virtual student art gallery. These programs are built around student engagement, feedback, and community engagement. The applicant has also provided details on a theory of change, and adequately described an approach to improving student learning outcomes served by the consortium. All of these programs and developments listed are aimed at being shared with surrounding districts, and have the potential to become part of a reform model replicated throughout the state.

For the extent to which the applicant has a high quality plan, the applicant scored high on this section of the proposal, receiving the full amount of points available. There were no sections of this proposal that warranted the deduction of points in the scoring of the section.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided very detailed information related to performance on summative assessments. The applicant has provided significant information related to decreasing achievement gaps. The applicant has said significant goals in the areas of graduation rates and college enrollment rates. The applicant has provided very detailed information regarding the number participating educators, number participating students, the number of participating high need students, the number participating low income students, and the number of participating students from low income families. The applicant has demonstrated through statistics a significant need in the targeted regions and districts.

This section of the proposal has provided a coherent and comprehensive vision that appears likely to result in improved student learning, student performance, and increased equity. The applicant has provided annual goals exceeding state targets for the low-income student subgroup defined in the competition. The applicant has provided the targeted increases in mathematics and literacy, and how these target goals will be measured and reported. In addition to math and literacy, the applicant has detailed decreases in achievement gaps, increases in graduation rates, and increases in college enrollment rates. The applicant provided detailed tables with the necessary data on school demographics, participating schools, and the targeted goals aligned with those schools. The applicant's goals appear measurable and reasonable. The applicant has provided disaggregated data in relation to school year, as well as the divide between overall students and low income students. The applicant provided detailed information on how they calculated factors such as college enrollment, for example noting that the calculation was based on the ratio between college enrolled students and their graduating cohort. For these reasons, the applicant scored high on this section of the proposal.

The applicant demonstrated ambitious goals that appear thoughtfully analyzed, and therefore achievable. In addition, when considered in the broader context of the high-quality plan detailed in the proposal, the ambitious goals seem achievable. For this reason, and those previously mentioned, the applicant scored in the mid-high range for this section of the proposal. The applicant provided detailed information regarding performance on summative assessments, including information on decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates, and postsecondary degree attainment. The applicant lost points for not disaggregating ambitious yet achievable annual goals across a wider range of high need subgroups. The applicant did distinguish between 'all-students' and 'low-income students.' However, the applicant did not disaggregate data for other high needs, sub groups. The number of high needs subgroups are mentioned in section A2 of the proposal, such as special needs students, but not included in the data here. For this reason the applicant did not recieve a perfect score on this section of the propsal.

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	14

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section of the proposal demonstrates a clear track record of success over the past four years. For example, the applicant reports a record of success in managing projects to improve student learning outcomes and close the achievement gap. The applicant reports a number of previously funded federal grant programs. The applicant reports a 25.34% increasing graduation rates, 32.95% increase in college and career readiness rates, the decreasing the dropout rate from 3.1% to 1.23%, a reduction in the percentage of students not taught by highly qualified teachers, and a reduction in the percentage of students taught by teachers on emergency/provisional certification dropping from 10.12 to 8.5%. The applicant provides a series of tables disaggregating data among various targeted counties to demonstrate success. There tables with disaggregated data show some statistical anomalies without much explanation. For example one tables chart on college and career readiness shows changes from 2010 at 32%, to 27% in 2011, 43% in 2012, and 72% in 2013. The extent to which the applicant demonstrated improvement in student learning outcomes led to a high score in this section of the proposal.

The applicant has provided information on a record of success over the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement. The applicant has provided tables, and supporting sections detailing student progress over the last four years. In virtually all areas the applicant has demonstrated improvements, with only slight statistical variations. For example, a 1% drop in successful transition rates in year 2011. The applicant has demonstrated improvements in college/career readiness, benchmarks on the ACT, academic improvements, averaged freshman graduation rates, and other factors. The applicant has detailed reforms in persistently lowest achieving schools. The

applicant's documented record of success between 2008/2009 through 2012/2013 includes a 25.34% + increase in the graduation rate from 66.4% to 91.74%, a 32.95%+ increase in the college and career readiness rate from 29% to 61.95%, a decrease in the dropout rate from an average of 3.1% to an average of 1.23%, a reduction in the % of students not taught by highly qualified teachers from 4.8% to -1%, a reduction in the % of students taught by teachers on emergency/provisional certification from 10.1 to 8.5%, and each district's universal participation in a 3 year teacher leader network focused on common core standards in mathematics and English/Language Arts. Other developments include each district's universal participation in a 3 year Instructional Supervisor Leadership Network (ISLN) focused on implementation of common core, data analysis, and instructional coaching, and the launch of a new regional network for newly adopted science standards. The applicant's state Board of Education identified 10 persistently lowest achieving schools, and developed a school turnaround model. As part of this plan the state *Department of Education* implemented data collection and analysis, benchmarks to determine gaps in curriculum, and made other steps to improve these schools. The applicant has a plan to make student performance data available to students, parents, and educators. Given the rural nature of the targeted schools, the applicant has identified a communication and information sharing model that appears promising. The applicant has shown success, and how sharing data has informed and improved participation, instruction, and services. For example, the applicant developed a system for persistently low-achieving schools and partners built on that experience and developed an integrated model of service delivery that focuses schools and districts on addressing specific issues relevant to achievement gap populations and uses staff specialists in areas including data analysis, special needs, and instructional interventions. The applicant uses a multi-district approach in the development of multiple supports intended to address the specific needs of each low-performing school. The applicant has also detailed work with existing partners in the region, which also seems promising. The applicant has identified the utilization of technology, and face-to-face methods of engagement. For these factors the applicant scored high on this section of the proposal.

A questionable aspect in this section of the proposal was the detail of the drug testing program for students. It's unclear how this program is consistent with student equity and learning, to improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps. More information to convince the evaluators that this program was not an infringement upon student rights and was implemented with proper safeguards would've enhanced this section of the proposal. In addition, more information regarding the statistical variation would enhance this section of the proposal. For these reasons, the section did not receive a perfect score.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

For the extent to which the applicant has detailed transparent access to personnel salaries for all school level instructional and support staff, personnel salaries for teachers, and nonpersonnel expenditures at the school level the applicant received full points on this section of the proposal.This section of the proposal demonstrates increasing transparency in processes, practices, and investments. For example, the applicant notes having monthly open publicly accessible education meetings, school-based decision-making meetings in participating schools, websites with transparency available to the public, and an office of education accountability profile. The applicant has specified processes, practices, and investments in increasing transparency. In addition, the applicant has provided evidence of the extent to which participating schools in the consortium have a high level of transparency in their processes, practices, and investments. This information includes details on making public expenditures available to the general public. The applicant details expenditures related to personnel salaries at various levels. For example, the applicant, according to State regulations, makes public the actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff. The applicant was clear that this information is at the 'school level'. The applicant reports communicating information through monthly open publicly accessible port meetings, monthly meetings in participating schools, links to district websites, the availability of an office of education accountability publication, and an open house portal. The applicant has indicated that transparency is increased through a school board decision-making council, and indicated that these councils include parents, teachers, and administrators. Because of the detailed information on the transparency impacting schools in the targeted consortium, the applicant received a high score in this section. The applicant provided specific details on the information that stakeholders can access through the open house portal. And has provided a coherent and comprehensive approach to sharing this data. The applicant received full points, by demonstrating a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments. The applicant will share over 125 reports on this information, explicitly based on the U.S. Census Bureau's classification used in the F-33 survey of local government finances. Again, the information made transparent includes actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only, actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only, and actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This section of the proposal details state legislative changes that allow public school districts great flexibility, and exemption from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions. The applicant reports building a foundation for learning systems as part of the partnership for next generation learning that began in 2010.

Consistent with the intention of the competition, the applicant has provided significant details on new instructional administrative practices,

which seem innovative and creative. These new practices are aimed at enhancing student learning and student performance. The promising aspects of this section of the proposal are the involvement of students and teachers in identifying the ways in which student learning can be enhanced, and defining new outcomes for student learning and designing new methods of measuring progress. The applicant has identified state reform initiatives consistent with this competition that support this section of the proposal. For these reasons the applicant scored high on this section of the proposal.

The applicant has provided demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in their proposal. The applicant received points for the extent to which they demonstrated successful conditions and sufficient autonomy. For example, the applicant has detailed innovations in autonomy such as moving to a "year-round" calendar, developing a "flexible" time concept, allowing students and teachers to be on different time schedules and different calendars, and so forth. In addition, the reports having taken positive steps to focus on making college and career readiness a reality for every student. This includes a senate bill enacted in 2009, for the purpose of supporting the identification of students as college- and career-ready. The applicant's Board of Education has implemented a series of readiness measures that include student performance on the completion of college placement tests.

More details and information on the actual impact of legislative changes would enhance this section of the proposal. In contrast to other sections of the proposal, information on the impact of the legislative changes are left somewhat vague. More information would be helpful in assessing the degree to which legislative changes fit with the intention of this program. For this reason, the applicant did not recieve full points for this section of the proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	**15**	**13**

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This section of the proposal adequately conveyed stakeholder engagement and support. This section of the proposal is also supported by letters of support included in the appendix. The applicant reports submitting a race to the top application in 2012 that nearly missed an award. The applicant reports sticking to the goals and visions formalized in their initial plan. This vision and plan included stakeholder engagement and support. The applicant reports using electronic surveys, focus groups, community forums, and electronic information sharing to garner support. The applicant details a significant online survey system, that received responses from over 7000 students, and more than 1600 teachers. The applicant provides tables and other evidence of significant support throughout the targeted districts. The applicant included over 150 letters of support, from very diverse groups. The applicant held a series of events to solicit input from a wide range of stakeholders. The applicant reports utilizing mixed methods to engage stakeholder engagement including electronic surveys, focus groups, community forums, and electronic information sharing. The applicant provided specific details on the number of students who provided feedback enhancing this section of the proposal. The applicant provided specific evidence of direct engagement among teachers. The applicant stated that collective bargaining is not required in their State or among their districts. Under a list of 'local teacher union or association presidents' who signed the MOU, only two names were provided with the remaining districts reporting "N/A" for not applicable. The applicant has specific data, however, to support their assertion of teacher engagement. For example, the applicant included a table indicating teacher support by district. This section of the proposal was convincing showing support in the 84% -to- 100% range. In fact, three district showed 100% support among teachers. The majority of districts were above 90% support. The applicant detailed state executive and legislative support, as well as face-to-face meetings with mayors and other elected officials for support. This was a promising aspect of this section consistent with the intention of the competition. For these reasons the applicant scored high in this section of the proposal.

More specific information regarding the nature of feedback would enhance this section of the proposal. More information on how feedback shape the formation of the proposal would enhance this section of the proposal. The applicant said that parent, teacher, and stakeholder feedback was used in shaping the development of the reform proposal. However no real specificity was provided. This lack of specificity prevented a perfect score on this section of the proposal. Nonetheless, the applicant still warrants a score in the high range for including a significant amount of evidence supporting a wide range of stakeholder engagement, and considerable support among teachers and the local community.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	**20**	**19**

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In this section of the proposal, the applicant provided a high-quality plan for enhancing student learning. To begin with, the applicant references legislation which reportedly led to the implementation of education initiatives focused on college readiness and degree completion. More directly related to enhancing learning, the applicant reports the utilization of a web-based data portal. The web based data portal was adequately detailed in the proposal, and convey the potential to enhance student learning.

The applicant has provided an approach to learning that engages and empowers learning with the support of parents and educators. For example, the applicant has developed a collaborative partnership tailored for each student according to the needs and interests of each individual student through project-based learning experiences will allow students to use technology and scientific inquiry.

The applicant has a high-quality plan for personalized sequences of instructional content and skill development designed to enable students to achieve individual learning goals. The application reports the development of leadership teams and curriculum coaches to work with school leadership and community partners in developing instructional delivery models. The applicant has provided very detailed and specific goals and objectives in this section of the proposal. The applicant has a fairly significant plan for ongoing and regular feedback. The applicant has provided a table that details the high-quality plan for learning. This table details the activities, timelines, deliverables, and person responsible. This table focuses on the mentor program, stars program, individual student you portfolio, individual learning plan, learning trajectories, distance-learning infrastructure, online learning opportunities for credit, career readiness, college readiness, and access to programs supporting stem initiatives.

The applicant has addressed accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college-and career-ready standards. For example, the applicant has 12 special education consultants who work with districts to increase student access to high quality learning. The special education consultants provide district and school level in multiple areas, and help with the integration of high-school curriculum to support students, including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency.

This section of the proposal details a high-quality plan that is comprehensive, and consistent with the intentions of the competition. The applicant has detailed the elements of the high-quality plan both in narrative form and detailed in a table listing activities, timelines, deliverables, and individuals responsible. The activities, deliverables, and individual responsible appear well planned, appropriate, and targeted. The applicant's high-quality plan appears well thought out, and consistent with the competition. Applicant's high-quality plan has goals centered on personalized learning environments strategies for high need students, mechanisms to provide training and support personalized learning, ongoing feedback in relation to individual student data, high-quality content, high-quality instructional approaches, personalized instruction, access and exposure to diverse cultures, and deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest. The applicant has also identified ways to engage the support of parents and educators. For these reasons and the specific data provided in relation, the applicant scored high on this section of the proposal.

The applicant has addressed how participating teachers will provide a personalized learning environment aligned to college and career ready standards for all students to ensure they have the supports that will enable them graduate academically prepared to be successful in the post-secondary world. The applicant has provided an approach to learning that engages students with the support of parents and educators. For example, the applicant engages teachers, parents and students in a collaborative partnership tailored for each student according to the needs and interests. The applicant has develop this engagement around project-based learning experiences will allow students to use technology and scientific inquiry. The applicant has focused on complex issues, problems, or challenges in students' communities, which are likely to lead to deeper learning experiences. The applicant has an approach where students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals. For example, the applicant has a mentor program that utilizes existing information from students' individualized learning plans to identify interests. The applicant has designed a program that will provide students with opportunities for real world project-based learning that solve community problems. The applicant has a plan to allow students to identify and pursue learning and development goals. For example, the applicant has designed a personalized learning model with a collaborative partnership between teachers, parents, students and schools. The model is reportedly tailored according to each student's interest and needs as well as linked to college- and career-ready standards.

The applicant cites research suggesting that project based learning leads to greater student engagement. The applicant has adequately addressed student access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives. For example, the applicant plans to develop a distance-learning program to provide students with opportunities to participate in classes with students from other locations. The applicant has a plan for students to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits. For example, the applicant will use problem-based learning in the context of challenging, open-ended lessons that address state common core standards. The applicants approach to problem-based learning includes goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

The applicant has adequately addressed using a variety of high-quality Instructional approaches and environments. For example, the applicant has identified design components required for these content areas, that includes a model-learning environment, differentiated instruction to personalize learning and provide students a variety of resources to engage and meet their needs, blended classrooms, multimedia resources in a technology-driven curriculum, and many other components. The applicant has addressed access to high-quality content. For example, the applicant will assist geographically isolated districts with increased curriculum opportunities through distance learning. The applicant also intends to train teachers to utilize next generation classroom technology, and other opportunities for high level content.

More detailed information on the selection of timelines would've enhance this section of the proposal. In the high-quality plan for learning, the applicant listed most of the targeted dates as 2014. The full implementation of so many initiatives within a short period of time is questionable without a detailed rationale for selection of the timelines. The applicant had limited information on K-5 students. For these two reasons the applicant did not receive a perfect score on this section.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	19

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In this section of the proposal, the applicant has provided a comprehensive coherent high-quality plan to improve learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The applicant has provided a high-quality plan to support students in development of career and college ready standards. Examples of the high-quality plan include the incorporation of the design team focused on personalized learning environments. This team has developed a delivery system focused on job that professional learning. As part of this initiative the applicant has provided teachers with professional learning opportunities that include brain research, frameworks for understanding poverty, multiple intelligences, distance-learning technology and pedagogy, project-based learning, response to intervention, integrating technology in the classroom, formative assessment, and ongoing analysis of data. The applicant has, as part of their high-quality plan focused on the adaptation of content and instruction. The plan here includes professional development for teachers on integrating technology, and a project-based learning. As part of the high-quality plan, the applicant has included a data portal to measure student progress. This approach appears promising and is adequately detailed in the proposal. The applicant has provided information on improving teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness in utilizing the feedback. The applicant has a detailed approach that incorporates coaches better provided training in coaching strategies. This approach seems promising and is adequately detailed in the proposal. As part of a high-quality plan the applicant has detailed teacher access to tools, data, and resources. This includes actionable information, where the applicant has detailed how each district will have the data analyst assigned to provide data to teachers, and help teachers use data more effectively. This plan is adequately detailed in the proposal, and includes a separate actions. This level of detail and information is part of a high-quality plan that is both cohesive and comprehensive. The applicant has, as part of their plan, high-quality learning resources. For example, the applicant has identified how exemplary teachers will engage in intense quality core trainings. These trainings are detail vividly in this section of the proposal. In addition the trainings are incorporated with other aspects of the proposal, including the data portal in a manner that makes the plan both comprehensive and coherent. The applicant has a detailed teacher evaluation system. The system includes observations by instructional leaders. This information is vividly detailed in the proposal.

The applicant has addressed educator engagement in training. The applicant has developed training that supports effective implementation of personalized learning environments. For example, the applicant has develop a 'next generation leadership and teacher academies' that will reportedly deliver high quality training to over 200 educators in a "train the trainer" model each year. The applicant has an integrated team of regional coaches and facilitators to engage teachers in training in their classrooms. The applicants approach appears thorough and promising. The applicant addressed the adaption of content and instruction. For example, the applicant will reportedly provide professional development to teachers on integrating technology into instruction and project-based learning so they can adapt content and instruction to provide students opportunities to engage in common and individual tasks in a personalized environment. The applicant has a comprehensive approach to measure student progress. For example, the applicant's data portal will work in collaboration with an 'open house' data warehouse that will reportedly provide teachers with current and relevant data on student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards. According to the applicant each district will have a data analyst to collect/analyze individual student data. The applicant has provided a comprehensive plan to improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness using feedback. For example, the applicant has developed a plan where a team of 'effectiveness coaches' will be identified, selected, and provided rigorous training. The applicant has addressed access to tools, data, and resources, including actionable information. For example, the applicant has a plan where each district will have a data analyst who will send actionable data to teachers, and engage teachers in using actionable data more effectively to guide learning for students. The applicant has addressed access to high-quality learning resources. For example, the applicant's plan will identify exemplary teachers and engage them in trainings, and they will be charged with developing additional core units, which they model for their peers. These trainings are linked to the next generation classrooms detailed in the proposal.

The applicant has identified leadership teams, and has included training, policies, tools, data, and resources for an effective leadership teams. For example, the applicant has developed innovation events with national mentors. He applicant's leadership team is reportedly focused on project effort, extend thinking, increase broad based national engagement in the process, and serve as critical collaborators to the initiative.

The applicant has a high-quality plan for increasing effective and highly effective teachers and principals. The plan includes actions, timelines, deliverables, and the persons responsible. The plan includes ambitious but achievable goals.

The applicant has provided detailed information on educator training, training related to personalized learning environments, adaptation of curriculum content and instruction, systems for measuring student progress, analysts for college and career readiness, improvement of teachers and administration, access the data tools and resources, high-quality learning resources, matching student needs to resources, resources for effective leadership teams, teacher evaluation system, systems for teacher improvements, and performance indicators related to closing achievement gaps. This section of the proposal provides detailed information and specific examples. This section provides a table with activities, timelines, deliverables, and the person responsible. The quality of the components are reasonable, the goals are ambitious, yet achievable.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant details a high-quality plan in which all school districts will collaborate. The applicant has provided a detailed high-quality plan on student opportunities to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. Information and a detailed plan on providing school leaders with flexibility and accountability was provided. Information on the success or fidelity of the flexibility programs in providing new options for students would enhance this section of the proposal. For example, any supporting data with the number of students earning credit in a traditional course by "testing out" by presenting a portfolio would have enhanced this section of the proposal. This information was included and adequately detailed. For example, the applicant has provided a set of modules for mathematics, and English/language arts. These modules are adequately detailed in the proposal. In addition, they are connected to other aspects of the overall plan, making it comprehensive and coherent. The applicant has detailed student opportunities to demonstrate mastery. The applicant has provided very specific information in this regard. In addition, the applicant has also provided detailed information on how the plan will provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible. This includes instructional practices adapted for high need students. The applicant has integrated the adapted and accessible instructional practices with a personalized learning environment, and the use of individualized learning plans. The applicant has addressed opportunities for learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

The applicant has a governance structure and organization where each of the 17 school districts in the consortium will collaborate through a collaborative. The applicant provided a detailed graph for the leadership organizational structure and governance as an appendix. The applicant has a structure to provide school leaders with flexibility and autonomy. For example, the applicant plans to phase-in implementation in order to thoughtfully address large-scale changes and build support.

The applicant received a high level score consistent with the extent to which they provided a high-quality plan with comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the educational system with support and resources necessary when and where they are needed. The applicant did not receive full points of this section, because information on how students could demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways was limited in the proposal.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**10**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a detailed table with a high-quality plan for district practices, policies rules, data, and infrastructure. This table also details activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsibility. The table provides information on the applicant's goals, and measures to assess progress.

The applicant has a high-quality plan necessary to address content, tools, and learning resources. For example, the applicant has provided adequate detail on the utilization of technology to increase digital literacy. This aspect of the plan includes lending libraries of technology for students who cannot afford their own. This section of the plan also details web-based instructional and curricular database populated by educators within the collaborative. This aspect of the plan was detailed adequately in the proposal. Details included utilization of lessons to meet criteria associated with the common core standards for teachers and students. The applicant detailed technological supports, including the utilization of the data analyst. The plan appears well supported an adequate for the intended goals. The applicant has included a high-quality plan in terms of data systems. This includes instructional application of curricular databases.

The plan is thought out and highly detailed. It includes a series of goals, reasonable timelines, and very specific information on the outcomes. For this high level of detailed information, conveying a high-quality coherent and comprehensive plan the applicant receive full points in this section of the proposal. The applicant had provided information on the use of information technology and open data formats. For example, the applicant intends to use an instruction and curricular database related to individual learning plans and individual student e-portfolios. The plan allows parents and students to access technological resources. Data systems are accessible by teachers, students, and parents. Reports from the database are exportable to excel for further manipulation or a PDF for reporting. According to the applicant, the systems are designed to provide relevant and timely information to staff about student learning.

The applicant has addressed ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal. For example, the applicant addressed this component by providing districts with lending libraries of technology for those students that cannot afford their own.

The applicant has developed a comprehensive high-quality plan that entails a web portal stated to have the capacity to analyze data from preschool through postgraduate work within the region. This plan entails the policies and infrastructure required for students and educators to access resources when and where needed. According to the applicant, and consistent with the intention of the competition, students and families will have increased

access to content through technology. The applicant also has planned for the development of infrastructure to provide schools with the technology to provide distant learning, this will be accessible to students, parents, the community and all caregivers.The applicant reports development of a web-based instructional and curricular database. The applicant reports this database will be accessible to students, parents, the community, and caregivers. This is consistent with the intention of the competition, in which technical support is provided through a range of strategies. The applicant has put forth a plan to utilize interoperable data systems among all LEAs including systems data focused on human resurces, student data, budget information, and so forth. The applicant addressed all the required components of this section. For this reason, the applicant received the full points available for this section of the proposal.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has included a high quality plan with activities, timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible. The applicant reports ongoing support provided by the RAND Corporation along with a continuous quality improvement process. This process included the development of a logic model identifying outcomes and mapping data with timely and regular feedback. The applicant reports that RAND will provide ongoing support of leadership. The utilization of an internationally recognized external evaluator enhances this section of the proposal significantly. In addition, the applicant reports the utilization of an advisory board. The applicant has identified advisory board of experts to work with project leaders and local stakeholders to steer policy and the implementation of the reform program. This section of the proposal provides significant details and has identified individuals to participate in the project.The application provides significant detail on the rationale for selecting measures, how the measures will provide information, the system for improvement and review related to the measures over time, as well as the activities and focus of the external evaluator.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**5**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided significant information on ongoing communication and engagement. For example, the applicant details ongoing engagement through consortium leadership team. This team is made up of representatives from each of the 17 districts associated with this project. In addition, the applicant has adequately provided details on engaging parents and community stakeholders through a series of workshops, trainings, and forums. The applicant has provided a detailed plan that allows for the adjustments and revisions necessary during implementation to achieve a high-quality approach to continuously improve its plans. In short, the applicant has a high-quality plan consistent with the intention of the competition for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The applicant has provided a table to detail ongoing communication and engagement.This high-quality plan is detailed in table 27 of the proposal. The table includes activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsibility. The table appears well thought out, highly detailed, and with a reasonable goals incorporated throughout. For the extent to which the applicant provided a high-quality plan, the applicant receive full points for this section of the proposal.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	**5**	**5**

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has addressed the criteria of this section in a series of tables. The applicant has provided a high-quality approach to continuously improving its plans. The applicant has provided ambitious yet achievable performance measures, connected to subgroups. The applicant has provided a plan with annual targets for required performance measures. The applicant has provided the rationale for selecting these measures, and incorporated information on how the measures will provide rigorous, timely, informative information tailored to the purposes of the plan and theory of action. For example, the performance measures are incorporated within a series of tables. These tables include the number and percentage of participating students. Rather than selecting generic goals, the applicant appears to have analyze previous data and set goals for performance measures according to existing baseline data. The applicant has divided these goals among all participating students, in low income students. Because the goals for analyze and develop according to baseline data, they appear both ambitious and achievable. For this reason the applicant received full points on this section of the proposal. In addition, the applicant has provided a high-quality plan noting how they will review and improve the measures over time, and how this information will be used to gauge implementation progress. The applicant provided over 16 measures.

	Available	Score
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	**5**	**4**

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of investments. The applicant has worked with a nationally recognized external evaluator who evaluated past investments. The applicant reports that a continuous quality improvement consultant from the external evaluator, will work with the state's Department of Education to ensure that data collection and program design are consistent with plans to conduct a rigorous national evaluation. The high-quality plan for this section of the proposal is seen most specifically in table-26 and table-27. These tables include activities, deliverables, timelines, and responsibility. The tables have quality information provide, for example a logical connection between the activities and deliverables. In addition, the tables have thoughtful timelines. The applicant will address professional development and the use of technology though their consultant and evaluator, the Rand Corporation. For example, the evaluator will reportedly identify and collect reliable and valid baseline data for program participants. Information on the plan to evaluate the effectiveness is included in other sections of the proposal. More information on the evaluation of activities that employ technology would have enhanced this section of the proposal. For these reasons, the applicant scored in the high range for this section of the proposal.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant reports having only identified program costs requested in the proposal. The applicant also reports the anticipation of in-kind and donated services through partnerships, with information included in the appendices. The applicant does provide some examples of these partnerships and potential in-kind donations. The applicant details the number of districts impacted by this proposal, as well as the number of students and educators. The applicant has provided a table detailing one-time investments. The applicant's requested budget is reasonable considering the scope of the project, and is sufficient to implement the project. The applicant has provided a detailed budget table with an overall summary of the project. The applicant has provided tables breaking down costs in relation to personnel, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, and other costs.

The applicant received full points for the extent to which the applicant's budget, budget narrative, and tables identifies all funds that will support the project. The applicant has identified RTTT-D funds to support an initiative for 17 school districts, 101 schools, 42,256 students and 2,860 educators. The applicant has developed a collaborative to provide a means to gather resources and connect schools to business and organizations that provide project-based learning opportunities and mentorship that are in-kind support. The applicant reports, that the operational cost of the project after one-time investments is $162 per year. This figure appears reasonable. The applicant provided a rationale for investments and priorities. The applicant will invest in projects that assist all districts in the proposal to implement personalized learning environments. The applicant specified funds for one-time investments.

| **(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)** | 10 | 9 |

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant reports the most fundamental elements of the sustainability program being vision, strategy, goals, and performance measures. The applicant reports significant community support. This support is evidenced by over 150 letters. The application references the use of distance learning technologies in a rural area to provide enhanced learnings across districts. This appears to be one of the more promising aspects of sustainability of the program, becuase once established it can provide ongoing instrucutional resources across rural areas. The applicant has also listed a set of contributions by the state Department of Education. The list of contributions appears promising. The applicant has also provided a sustainability plan detailed in a table format. The table on sustainability is very thorough providing a breakdown of goals, activities, deliverables, timelines, and persons responsible.

The applicant has a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The applicant has a stated goal of creating systems, resources, and tools which will lead to resurgence in educational achievement. To accomplish this the applicant has built community support for their project. The applicant has developed strategic partnerships with organizations through-out the region to provide knowledge and resources that the applicant reports will help sustain efforts past the grant period. The applicant reports that the professional development programs the district has created will develop strong and effective teachers which will sustain internal systems to ensure necessary fiscal, personnel, evaluation and other internal capabilities. The applicant reports that several of their initiatives will lead to lower costs in the future. For example, the applicant reports that the initiation of distance learning technology will allow districts to collaborate to provide students with low-density classes, which are cost effective. The applicant's plan includes support from State and local government leaders and financial support. For example, the applicant notes programs including a US Department of Education Investing in Innovation Development program grant for $2,948,000, a US Department of Education Middle School Drug and Violence Prevention funded for more than $1.5 million, and a US Department of Education Grants to Reduce Alcohol Abuse among Secondary School Students funded for more than $736,000. The applicant's local education consortium has developed a policy to approve individual

budgets for several recurring blended programs including a comprehensive special education support system. The applicant noted an education program serving eight counties with annual grant funding of $1.5 million, to augment the proposed plan.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided significant details on wraparound services for K-12 students, assisting into the post secondary period. This section of the application provides significant details on partnerships and collaboration regarding social, emotional, and behavioral needs.

The applicant met the competitive preference priority by demonstrating the extent to which the plan will integrate public and private resources in a partnership designed to augment existing resources and provide additional student and family supports. For example, the applicant has a plan that addresses the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of participating students. In addiiton, a high priority has been given to students participating in schools, identified with high needs. For example, the applicant has focused on creating services that support the whole child as well as his or her family. These have been developed as wraparound services for students. The partnerships identified in the proposal include community care centers, comprehensive health care centers, health departments, public libraries, early childhood providers, and other school/community partners. The applicant has adequately identified these partnerships with specific information, including the types of services provided. The applicant has an approach to establishing healthcare hours in schools, in all of the participating 101 schools in the 17 districts. This approach appears comprehensive, and extremely positive. The applicant has also alluded a plan that includes access to quality healthcare. These services include clinics that provide treatments for common medical problems, routine exams, screenings, and several other healthcare related services. In addition to health care, mental health services are adequately detailed in the plan. The applicant has provided extremely detailed information on how the services will be provided, including how the partnership will track the selected indicators that measure the results at the aggregate level for all children within the consortium. In addition, the applicant has provided information on the use of data to target resources to improve results for participating students. The applicant has provided information on the use of data to place a special emphasis on students facing significant challenges, such as high need students. The applicant has also developed a strategy to scale the model beyond participating schools to other high need students. The applicant has provided a table that identifies the targeted population groups, the type of results intended, and the overall outcome or desired results. The applicant has included the approach here within the overall sustainability aspect of the proposal, which is a very positive approach. The applicant has provided a detailed table on the needs and assets of the schools and communities aligned with the project. The applicant has provided sufficient information on the decision-making process and infant structure necessary to select, implement, and evaluate supports. The applicant has adequately identified the agencies responsible for the decision-making process and infrastructure development. The applicant has a plan to engage parents and families of participating students. The applicant has adequately provided details on engaging parents through a series of workshops, as one example. The applicant has detailed information on an external evaluator who routinely assess the applicant's progress. For these reasons, the applicant received full points for this section of the proposal.

The applicant has identified population–level desired results. For example, the applicant is focused on an increase in the number of students entering kindergarten ready to learn, an increase in the average daily attendance, an increase in the number of student instructional days due to a decrease in absenteeism of self and/or family member(s), and increase in staff productivity due to a decrease in teacher/staff absenteeism. The applicant's partnership will operate to track selected indicators through an external evaluator, who will collect data on the selected measures on a quarterly and annual basis. The applicant will use the data to target its resources. For example, thorough an analysis of gaps and needs in section and based on the fact that 71.2% of the participants in this initiative are students who are from low-income families, the applicant has targeted resources on students from low-income families. The applicant has a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students. As part of the applicant's sustainability they plan to work with all districts to scale-up programs as they prove successful and as resources permit. The applicant is focused on improving results over time. For example, the applicant reports that the external evaluator will collect data on this program on a quarterly and annual basis.

The applicant adequately addressed how the partnership and consortium will build capacity, including assessing the needs and assets of participating students,directly relevant to the competitive preference priority.

The applicant received full points for the extent to which they provided a high-quality plan consistent with the intention of the competition.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score

Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has significantly detailed the targeted population, and the level of desired results. The applicant has addressed the core educational assurance areas. The applicant has provided detailed information and a table on the fostering of varmints to improve learning and teaching through personalized strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators aligned with college and career ready standards.

Throughout the proposal the applicant coherently and comprehensively addresses how they will build on the core educational assurance areas. The applicant has adopted standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy. The applicant has developed a plan with data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction. The applicant has developed a plan focused on recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals. The applicant's plan centers attention on turning around its' lowest-achieving schools. The applicant's plan has the potential to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards. The applicant's plan has the potential to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student. The focus of the proposed plan has the potential to increase the effectiveness of educators and expand student access to the most effective educators. The applicant has focused adequate attention on decreasing achievement gaps across student groups. For these reasons, the applicant has met the criteria for absolute priority-1.

Total		210	196

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0080KY-3 for Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application provides thorough and specific information on how the consortium is building on each of the four core educational assurance areas. The evidence details historical activities and projects in each core area by ARI project members. For example, all State LEAs give an aligned assessment system which includes Explore, PLAN, and ACT. The project will build upon the State data system to develop a regional data warehouse for the ARI. The ARI consortium and KVEC began a relationship with Teach for America several years ago as one step to recruit highly qualified teachers, with more than 50 placed in high-need schools. Low-achieving schools will participate in PETLL (developed by the lead LEA) as one of the steps to turn around performance. The application narrative provides a clear picture of what students experience in the school, the role and work of teachers, and the learning culture in the school. For example, one set of students may be using "interactive video teleconferencing" with students in another country, while another group is adding designs for an "architecture class to their e-portfolios." The narrative presents clear and credible goals through five separate but interrelated (sub)projects. The overall project's success in reaching increased levels of student performance, increasing equity, and raising the percentage of students ready for college and career success depend upon implementation fidelity of these five interconnected projects (i.e., personalized learning environments; next generation classrooms; accessible data systems; effective teachers and leaders; college- and career-readiness). Several key strategies for overall project

implementation and oversight are described, including a team of national educational leaders to serve as process observers and advisors to the consortium. Overall the narrative is well articulated and fully addresses their comprehensive reform vision, which supports a rating in the high range.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative presents a clear and comprehensive description of the selection process for participating LEAs for the ARI project. LEAs were selected based on their "commitment and readiness" to engage in innovative strategies to increase student achievement, as signified by membership in a consortium for a 2012 RTTD application and recommitment for the current 2013 project. The narrative includes a list of participating districts and schools, the total number of participating students and educators, the number of participating low-income students, and the number of participating high need students. The narrative describes an inclusive, thorough application development process, which included the solicitation of design input from potential participating LEAs. Overall, the application provides a complete picture of the ARI consortium implementation approach in a well-articulated narrative, which supports a rating in the high range.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative includes a high-quality plan covering five ARI projects. The project will be implemented in each school within each consortium LEA. The plan (Table 2) is specific to section A3, and clearly describes goals, numerous activities related to a specific goal, a timeline for an activity which includes both year and month of completion, deliverables from the specific activity, and the responsible party for the activity. The plan includes a number of major components, several of which are unique in that they provide students with direct leadership roles in the project (i.e., STARS, Telling the Story, and Regional Student Senate). The initiative includes individual student e-portfolios for students in grades 6-12, limiting the use of these for post-secondary education. This limitation makes the portfolio feasible and practical for students and teachers, rather than an all-encompassing electronic file cabinet approach for K-12 students. The Accessible Data Systems project within the overall initiative is a well-conceived and thought out set of subprojects that address important teacher and student needs within a personalized learning context, on both an individual and collective basis (e.g., e-portfolio, individual learning plan, web-based instructional database). Although ARI includes a lot of separate strategic pieces (e.g., Next Generation Skills training), the narrative clearly describes the targeted students for the strategy, and when and how the strategy is integrated into the total project matrix. Therefore, even though the project has many individual component programs and pieces, it does not present itself as overwhelming for individual teachers or students. Table 2 provides the plan for A3, but it is difficult to determine in a table format when each major component begins development and when it will be operational for use by teachers or students, which a Gantt chart would clarify. Overall, the application presents a thorough, comprehensive high-quality plan for each of the five separate, but interrelated ARI projects. The application addresses each selection criteria through detailed narrative and tables, which in general provides clear pictures of activities and deliverables, but whose timelines could be clarified through additional information (e.g., a Gantt chart). The overall evidence supports a rating in the high range.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application A4 tables provide goals for each of the four required areas: summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment. The ARI goals apply to each individual LEA, and are provided as percentage increases from the baseline year. Increases in performance on summative assessments over the four grant years are around 16-20%, which are realistic and achievable goals. These yearly and overall increases are ambitious, because given the persistent historical low performance (compared to State and national levels) of these LEAs and low-income students, a consistent rise in proficiency and decrease in performance gap over a four-year period would represent performance rarely seen in any LEA in the nation. Similarly, increases in graduation and college enrollment rates per year and over the term of the grant are achievable, reasonable, and ambitious from the baseline year, with the final project year target close to 95%. The goals for decreases in achievement gaps between low-income and white students range about 20-40%, which are ambitious targets, yet achievable as yearly changes are reasonable. Note that the decreases in the performance gap means reducing the White vs. Low-Income difference by, for example, 20% of the current gap, not reducing the gap by 20% overall. That means a 40 point gap reduced by 20% is an actual 8 point difference (40 x .2 = 8). The information provided in the tables for A4 include not only the required student performance targets, but a description of the summative assessments, the methodology for determining growth, methodology for determination of achievement gaps, and methodology for graduation rate and college enrollment. Overall, the evidence provided is complete, clear, and specific to the selection criteria, and supports a rating in the high range.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	**15**	**12**

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative for B1 provides a clear example of how each participating LEA in ARI has improved student outcomes in some area and has a track record of success. For example, both Knott and Jenkins LEAs have shown composite ACT score gains of 1.2+ points over the past four years. The overall consortium graduation rate has increased by 26% (from 66% to 92%) from 2009-2013. However, there is not information provided on how each LEA has closed the achievement gap for students within their individual LEA, which is one of the required selection criteria in B1a. The narrative provides a thorough description of how two persistently low-achieving schools (i.e., Lee County HS and Leslie County HS) within the consortium have dramatically improved student performance through significant reforms, which included use of benchmark assessments, PLCs, and a personalized learning system. The narrative describes strategies appropriate to a rural area for increasing parent participation and an understanding of student performance data. This includes both physical (e.g., transportation) and digital strategies for increasing knowledge level and understanding, which is a sound methodology for meeting needs of individual parents. Overall, the narrative addresses in a comprehensive manner most, but not every, component within the selection criteria. The application does not provide, for each LEA, each of the required components of B1a. Thus, the evidence only supports a rating in the lower portion of the high range.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	**5**	**4**

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative presents substantial evidence of efforts by all consortium LEAs to increase transparency in practices, processes, and investments. The application describes the methods that individual LEAs use to increase transparency by sharing information and decision-making opportunities with their public. These include decision-making councils, links to district, school, and state websites, Board of Education meetings, and web portals containing multiple types and sources of information. All of these are appropriate and reasonable strategies to increase parent and community support through transparency in processes, practices, and investments.The narrative notes that each participating LEA in ARI communicates and makes public the required expenditure and salary information (personnel salaries for instructional and support staff, teachers, non-personnel expenditures). However, the application does not provide evidence of that through, for example, a table for one of the LEA schools that lists the total personnel salaries for school-level instructional staff and support staff, the total salaries at that school for instructional staff, the total salaries at that school for teachers, and the total non-personnel expenditures at that school. Overall, the narrative provides information on the required selection criteria, but does not include an evidential example of the expenditures at a school level, supporting a rating in the high range but not the highest score.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	**10**	**7**

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative provides substantial information about the flexibility each of the consortium LEAs has to implement the project through state statutes and laws. For example, each LEA can take advantage of creating school calendars that create trimesters, semesters, or even year-round calendars. However, the application does not include information specific to each LEA on how that LEA can use the state flexibility to implement the application's personalized learning approach. Therefore, although the state-level information is clear, thorough, and applicable to the project, the narrative does not provide complete information for each LEA, as required by the selection criteria. The evidence supports a rating in the upper part of the middle range.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	**15**	**14**

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application provides substantial evidence of support for the project from key stakeholders in each of the participating LEAs. This includes letters of support from business and organizational leaders, institutes of higher education, city mayors in all included counties, and the Kentucky Department of Education. The narrative provides a clear description of the process used in the application's development, which demonstrates broad engagement of a variety of groups (e.g., 33 regional community forums) and individuals in the proposal, with numerous opportunities for meaningful input into the

process. Online surveys produced over 7000 student and 1600 teacher responses, which is a very high rate of input from the total population of potential participants. The teacher support for the project from each LEA ranges from 81-100%. Those LEAs that have collective bargaining include evidence of support through the signature of their teacher union president. The narrative states that comments and questions from the various groups and meetings were "used to inform the continued development of the ARI application." However, the application does not include an example of a specific change or revision to the proposal based upon feedback, which is one part of Selection Criteria B4a. Overall, the narrative addresses all but one of the selection criteria in a thorough manner, supporting a rating at the upper portion of the high range.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative includes a high-quality plan (Table 23) specific to C1 Learning with goals, activities specific to the particular goal, timelines that include month and year, deliverables for each activity, and responsible parties for carrying out the activity. The application's narrative addresses most of the required selection criteria with clear, direct, applicable statements on how the ARI plans to prepare students for college and career success.

The project's approach to learning (C1a) that engages learners includes flexibility for LEAs and schools to select an instructional approach based on unique school or LEA characteristics. This flexibility is linked to accountability, in that action-research projects will document success, which is a strong and unique project strategy. ILPs, mentors, and project-based learning strategies will form the basis for students' understanding that what they are learning is key to their own success. The use of ILPs and project/problem-based learning are denoted as strategies for ensuring student involvement in diverse contexts, deep learning experiences, mastering critical content, and pursuing college/career goals. With so many individual instructional issues dependant upon project-based learning strategies, it is critical that this project activity/program strategy be implemented with great fidelity and quality with every classroom teacher.

The narrative details an extensive array of strategies to which teachers and students will have access for differentiated, personalized learning, including blended classrooms, a digital learning platform, and online math and literacy courses. Feedback to students on progress will be provided through results from summative and formative assessments, and, at grades 6-12, through an e-portfolio. The strategies described in the narrative are applicable for high-needs and at-risk students, and the software and strategies are amenable to appropriate accommodations for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Overall, the number of instructional options available to teachers and data collection strategies and processes for monitoring student performance have the potential to provide meaningful personalized learning strategies for every individual student.

However, though the narrative describes an array of appropriate instructional methods and techniques, some are limited to students in middle and high school (e.g., mentors and ILPs). There is insufficient information in the narrative about learning strategies in K-5 that will prepare students for success at MS and HS in using techniques such as ILPs and problem-based learning. In addition, some of the deliverables in the C1 plan (Table 23) are too vague (e.g., schools will remove barriers to student participation), which makes measurement and monitoring difficult.

The narrative for C1c describes a program (C3R) that allows students to explore career and workforce trends, but C3R does not address the specific selection criteria on training and support for students to ensure they understand tools and resources to monitor and manage their learning.

Overall, the application addresses most of the required selection criteria with sound, achievable, strong strategies, particularly for students in grades 6-12. However, the narrative is insufficient in providing details on the personalized learning environment for students in K-5, on several of the deliverables in the C1 plan (Table 23), and in strategies for training and support to students. This supports a rating in the lower portion of the high scoring range.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	**20**	**18**

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative includes a high-quality plan (Table 24) specific to C2 Teaching and Leading with goals, activities specific to the particular goal, timelines that include month and year, deliverables for each activity, and responsible parties for carrying out the activity. The application narrative addresses each of the required selection criteria with clear, direct, applicable

statements on how the ARI plans to ensure teachers and principals have the knowledge and skills to personalize student instruction.

For C2a, the narrative outlines a variety of training opportunities for teachers that align with and address personalized learning environments (e.g., job-embedded professional development through coaches and facilitators, and regional training opportunities for specific strategies). It is not clear, however, what activities are required by all teachers and what choices teachers have in selecting particular professional development activities. The narrative describes the processes to adapt content and instruction (e.g., coaches and facilitators working with LEAs), as well as how student progress will be measured and communicated through the ARI data portal and state data warehouse systems. It is not clear in the table and narrative, however, how often each specific professional development opportunity/technique/strategy will be provided to teachers, and how teacher involvement in training will be monitored and evaluated. The ARI will use the state KDE effectiveness model and principal/teacher data within a coaching model in each LEA to provide feedback and improve instructional practice.

For C2b, the narrative describes a strong multi-method process to ensure teachers have actionable data and sufficient knowledge to use the information for improvement. Each LEA will have its own data analyst who, along with other resources (e.g., PETLL), will work directly with teachers. Training in specific processes and tools (e.g., RtI, PETLL) will be provided to teachers and principals to facilitate their personalized instructional decisions for students. It is not clear in the narrative, however, how each of the separate trainings and strategies that will be available to teachers and principals will be presented in a manner that will not be either intimidating or an overwhelming amount of "new" strategies and processes for teachers to learn and use. Without this planning and organizational structure related to the professional development activities, teachers are likely to not increase their capacity to support student progress, because they do not feel that they can be successful in all of the personalized learning strategies. For C2d, activities presented in the C2 plan (Table 24) address specific strategies that ARI will use to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective teachers, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas (e.g., recruiting teachers with specific skill sets, and providing graduate tuition support for teachers who commit to teaching in a hard-to-staff school).

For C2c, school leadership teams will receive substantial professional development on the State Effectiveness System, which is a multi-strategy approach (e.g., peer observations and self-reflection components) to increasing effective teachers and principals. In addition, ARI is structuring professional development opportunities around six clusters (e.g., interactive learning, flexible scheduling, authentic assessment) which align to the overall project activities and goals.

Overall, the application presents a thorough, comprehensive high-quality plan for C2 Teaching and Leading. The application addresses each selection criteria through detailed narrative and tables, which in general presents a comprehensive and aligned set of activities, strategies, partnerships, and opportunities for teaching and leading. It is not clear, however, how this extensive array will be presented in an organized, simple manner that is not overwhelming to staff, which is certainly necessary to ensure both optimal learning and use of these personalized learning strategies. This supports a rating in the upper part of the high range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative includes a high-quality plan (Table 25) that includes goals, with activities specific to the particular goal, timelines that include month and year, deliverables for each activity, and responsible parties for carrying out the activity. Overall, the narrative provides a clear description of a variety of activities and opportunities for consortium LEAs to develop and enhance policies and practices that support personalized learning. This includes an overall consortium district-level leadership development process through the AIC, and building level strategies like the council-of-councils for school based decision making. At the school level, the narrative describes a phased-in implementation process for a variety of system issues (e.g., credit flexibility, school funding formulas), to allow time for thoughtful consideration of changes and build support and understanding. This phase-in process is a sound strategy, as it is likely to be more successful in the LEAs than would an all-at-once forced implementation strategy. The narrative describes a number of alternative methods by which students would be able to progress or earn credit for mastery at multiple times, including independent study, the e-portfolio, online courses, and projects. These are a reasonable number of options available to students, but the narrative does not provide information on the comparability of demonstrating mastery through these options. The narrative notes that these and other learning resources and instructional practices are amenable for accommodations as needed for students with disabilities and English learners. These types of strategies are applicable for students mainly in middle and high school, however, and the narrative does not explain the flexibility or options available for students at the elementary

school level. Therefore, the evidence supports a rating only in the lower part of the high range.

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

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative includes a high-quality plan (Table 25) that includes goals, with activities specific to the particular goal, timelines that include month and year, deliverables for each activity, and responsible parties for carrying out the activity. The narrative provides feasible and reasonable strategies to ensure the LEA and school infrastructure will support their personalized learning plan. The ARI will develop a web-based instructional and curricular database "populated" by educators in the project. It is not clear from the narrative if all of the tools noted (e.g., tutorials, study guides, video) will be useful and appropriate to teachers and students at all levels (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school) or if they will focus mainly or entirely at the high school level. The narrative states that access to the web-based instructional and curricular support technologies will be available to all students regardless of income, through lending libraries of technology. Online curriculum content will be available for students/teachers in grades 7-12; the narrative does not describe if K-6 will have online curricular content. This is important because the selection criteria specify that all participating students have access to necessary content both in and out of school, which is feasible if online strategies are available for students/teachers at all grade levels. Technical support in each LEA (for students, educators, and parents) will be provided through a data analyst and educational technology staff, an online support structure, as well as consortium-level staff. The data systems will use an open data format and be interoperable, which will facilitate data use by teachers, students, and parents. Overall, the narrative describes a wide variety of strategies and tools that will ensure sufficient LEA and school capacity—hardware, software, and support—for personalized learning. However, the narrative does not provide sufficient information on the curricular and instructional tools (e.g., web-content or web-based instruction) that will be available at the elementary school level. Therefore, the evidence supports a rating only in the lower part of the high range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative includes a high-quality plan (Table 26) specific to E1 Continuous Improvement with goals, activities specific to the particular goal, timelines that include month and year, deliverables for each activity, and responsible parties for carrying out the activity. The narrative provides a strong list of multiple ways in which, at project and district levels, continuous improvement will be monitored on a timely and regular basis. This includes project leadership team meetings, an expanded AIC advisory board that includes national educational experts, and cross-district opportunities for professional practice. The RAND evaluator will collect quarterly data on various implementation measures, which will be publicly disseminated. Each LEA will participate in regular academic reviews to analyze school and district student achievement data. A data dashboard will provide ARI project and district level reports to monitor implementation and results and guide decision making for improvement. This dashboard capability is important at the school level, also, but the narrative does not denote reports will be available at that level. Overall, the project design includes sufficient and varied strategies at the project and LEA level for comprehensive monitoring, with a few (e.g., Communities of Professional Practice) at the school level. No classroom level continuous improvement strategy is noted in the narrative, which is a weakness since change occurs at a teacher/classroom level and monitoring and measuring status and change in classrooms is important. Thus, even though a strong set of tools and processes are noted for project and district level monitoring, the overall evidence only supports a rating in the lower part of the high range.

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

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative includes a high-quality plan (Table 27) specific to E2 Communication and Engagement with goals, activities specific to the particular goal, timelines that include month and year, deliverables for each activity, and responsible parties for carrying out the activity. The narrative and table provide a comprehensive and thorough plan using multiple strategies to communicate with both external (e.g., parents) and internal (e.g., ARI consortium leadership team) stakeholders. Strategies include both digital (e.g., web-based portals and sites) and onsite personal methods (e.g., workshops, forums) of communication and engagement. The evidence provided supports a rating in the high range.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative and tables provide project student performance measures that are ambitious yet achievable. The 17 performance measures include those required for all applicants (e.g., percent of students whose teacher/principal of record is effective or highly effective) and applicant-proposed measures (e.g., percent of students meeting the Explore Test composite score standard). The annual targets are provided for the overall project (all participating students) and for subgroups (low-income students).The targets are achievable within the four-year grant time period, as they represent modest increases (e.g., generally 5-9% for achievement measures) for all participating students and the low-income subgroup. The targets are ambitious, particularly for FAFSA (i.e., increasing the percentage from about 55% of students to around 70% for all students and low-income subgroup), as the year-four targets would represent high levels of performance for rural LEAs and low-income students. The narrative provides the rationale for selecting each measure (e.g., a need for a math and literacy measure at each school level), and information on how the measure is appropriate to provide timely data aligned with the theory of action for project implementation. For example, student absenteeism/attendance is a social-emotional measure, which is significantly related to student achievement and academic success. The narrative describes a very strong and comprehensive set of evaluation activities that RAND (the external evaluator organization) will implement to review and improve the measures throughout the project (e.g., use of case studies and student surveys). The strategies and analytic methods (e.g., use of a comparison group) are appropriate, technically robust, and should provide a clear and comprehensive analysis of the impact and effects of the ARI. Overall, the evidence supports a rating in the high range.

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

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application describes a process for evaluating the effectiveness of grant-funded activities in E4 and other sections (i.e., E3). The strategies and analytic methods (e.g., use of a comparison group) are appropriate, technically robust, and should provide a clear and comprehensive analysis of the impact and effects of the ARI. However, the narrative does not include a high-quality plan with goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible persons, which is a required selection criterion. Therefore, although the narrative describes an appropriate and feasible evaluation process, the overall evidence supports only a rating at the lower portion of the high range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget narrative and tables presented in the application are thorough and clear, both at the overall level and at each project level. The application clearly identifies all funds for the project, and describes which funds will be used for one-time investments (e.g., distance learning infrastructure hardware and software) and which costs are ongoing throughout the grant period and beyond. In addition, staff that cross projects are clearly identified and budgeted within each subproject. The budgets are reasonable and sufficient for the project evaluation to produce a strong set of analyses and useful reports. Project-level budgets provide for key staff (e.g., Project Director), the amount of time (in FTE) spent on ARI work, and the budget for that time. The project-level budgets are complete, with itemized costs for personnel, equipment, supplies, contractual and indirect costs. Overall, the application's evidence provides a clear picture of how the grant funds would be expended for the project, addressing all required selection criteria, which supports a score in the high range.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative includes a high-quality plan (Table 29) specific to F2 Sustainability with goals, activities specific to the particular goal, timelines that include month and year, deliverables for each activity, and responsible parties for carrying out the activity. The narrative provides numerous relevant statements which support a conclusion that project activities (e.g., professional development on differentiated learning delivered through staff certified via the Train the Trainer model) and goals will be adequately supported, after grant funding ends, to sustain the investments and continue to increase student achievement and teacher effectiveness. For example, the technology infrastructure of websites, online learning, and professional development opportunities will be ongoing with minimal funding required for maintenance of these strategies. In addition, the narrative provides numerous examples of how the KVEC has provided continued funding streams for prior

grant-funded activities. Overall, the application provides evidence that supports a rating in the high range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The narrative describes ongoing ARI partnerships with multiple organizations to provide additional resources for services that address social, emotional, or behavioral needs of students in alignment with the broader Race to the Top-District proposal. The ARI partnerships with AIC, KRCC, MCC, and FIF will provide health and mental health services in each of the participating schools, which are seen as key links to increased student achievement and the larger ARI activities. A second focus of these partnerships is kindergarten readiness, which is a key factor in achieving college and career readiness in secondary schools. The eight (8) population-level desired results include both educational (e.g., increase kindergarten readiness) and family/community (e.g., increase parent attendance), with specific targets and timelines provided for each outcome (e.g., increase by 10% by SY 2015-16). These targets are reasonable and achievable within the resources described in the narrative. The narrative describes a feasible plan by which the external evaluator (RAND) will track indicators and provide feedback quarterly to improve results over time (e.g., quarterly attendance data will be provided to ARI Leadership Team for integration with other continuous improvement process measures). The ARI Leadership Team will work with the two districts in the KVEC that are not part of the Consortium project to scale up the model once activities/processes are shown to be successful. The plan described in the narrative to integrate these health services within existing education services appears practical and feasible, as it focuses on educational aspects of health services. The narrative thoroughly describes how the partnership builds the capacity of staff in the participating schools, using periodic needs assessment in participating districts, using as existing advisory council to support and evaluate this project, providing forums and training for parents and families to educate and gather input, and professionally evaluate the project through the overall project evaluator RAND. Overall, the narrative provides sufficient description of a supportive, beneficial partnership providing additional resources that align with the overall project goals to justify a rating in the high range.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The application describes a thorough and ambitious project to create personalized learning environments in 17 rural LEAs. The narrative builds on the core educational assurance areas throughout the project, particularly monitoring student progress through assessments and providing teachers and students with access to data to monitor and adjust instruction to target individual learning goals. The project builds upon each LEA's work and prior collaboration between the LEAs and KVEC. The major project deliverables are designed to significantly impact teaching and learning in the participating schools by providing personalized resources for curricular content and assessment of knowledge. The outcome measures are aligned with the project goals and with increased student achievement and preparing all students for careers/college. Successful project implementation should decrease achievement gaps between low-income and white students and elevate overall performance of persistently low-achievig schools and high needs students.The plans for teacher professional development, use of the state's teacher effectiveness process, and strategies to recruit teachers should expand the number of students who are instructed by highly effective and effective teachers. Overall, the project as described in the application should increase achievement K-12, and particularly at the middle and high school levels, which have an extensive array of student and teacher strategies to personalize the learning environment.

Total		**210**	**187**

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0080KY-2 for Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application's reform for the consortium (ARI) of 17 school districts in Kentucky is clearly articulated and is coherent in its approach. The applicant builds on the current work relative to the four core educational assurance areas. The application specifies the current conditions in the consortium and what the project will specifically do to enhance and expand the assurance areas. Overall, the plan describes a clear and credible approach to meeting the goal of implementing a personalized learning environment for the students participating in this consortium.

The five projects and their components are directly aligned with these four core educational assurance areas. For adopting standards and assessments (area 1), the applicant will continue its Common Core Integration Initiative, which provides professional development to teachers. It also plans to expand trainings centered on the state's educator support model, Continuous Instructional Improvement System (CIITS). For assurance area 2 - data systems, the plan is to develop a regional warehouse using the state's "Open House" data system. Additionally, through the CIITS system, expanded professional development, regionally and locally, will be provided to teachers for using the student achievement data effectively as well as to use this system for flexible student mastery. For the effective educators assurance, the applicant will develop an on-line database for teacher strengths and needs using the data to develop trainings and assign mentors to teachers in need. Specific communities of professional practice will refine the skills of educators. Also, a graduate tuition support will be available for teachers for high need subjects and specialties. For assurance area 4, low-performing schools, the applicant will build on strategies currently used to help these schools such as data analysis, common core implementation, coaching, and use of a developed model framework of school analysis and support. School leaders and teachers will also participate in communities of professional practice with a higher education partner.

The ARI's five projects are:

1. Personalized Learning

2. Next Generation Classrooms

3. Accessible Data Systems

4. Effective Teachers & Leaders

5. College and Career Readiness

The approaches described in the application are credible in that the work has already begun throughout the consortium. This grant would continue, enhance and expand this work.

The lead agency is not a school district; rather a public agency that is a provider of educational support services and is also designated an LEA by the state of Kentucky.

To ensure the success of the initiatives, the applicant has developed a number of strong and varied community partnerships to support its goals. Additionally, 10 national experts are participating in the project to serve to integrate the proposal's components.

The organizational structure of the project has the necessary oversight (management, structure and evaluation) to ensure success.

The applicant provides an overall view of the district report cards providing data such as graduation rates, qualified teachers, etc. Also of note are the rural nature and the high poverty levels of the school districts in this consortium. Therefore, the focus of the application is to close the achievement gaps of the low-income students.

Based on the described projects, students in the classrooms will have additional and varied educational opportunities using technology to broaden the curriculum, such as community-based problem solving projects and opportunities using technology labs and interactive video teleconferencing. The projects will enhance the current conventional courses, many of which are on-line.

A description of the classroom experience for students and teachers is clearly specified using the Individual Learning Plans and E-portfolios. With these strategies, each student's path will be focused and customized. This will allow each student to know their learning gaps and what progress they need to make. For teachers, they will be using real-time data and incorporating technology into the classroom.

The proposal is supported and complimented by the applicant's reform vision. The overall plan is comprehensive and coherent placing its score for this section in the high range.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The districts participating in this consortium are already members of the Appalachian Innovation Collaborative (AIC). An application by this consortium was submitted in the 2012 RTTD competition. The selection process to identify participating districts and schools consists of those that are part of the AIC. Further, these participants are those that have expressed a commitment and readiness to implement the components of the proposal.

The application demonstrates careful planning that began in April 2013 and used a variety of methods to develop the application (meetings, public forums and surveys with students and teachers). The results of one of the surveys are evidence of the level of engagement and detailed questions relative to a personalized learning environment. The participating districts agreed with the contents of the application based upon their input.

There are 17 districts and its 101 schools participating. Of the 101 schools, all students (42,256) and all educators (2,860) will be served in this grant. Of the total participating students, 35,018 are high-need students and 32,181 are low-income. According to the data provided, the students collectively meet the poverty criteria (76.2%). These participating schools also meet the definition of rural schools.

Based upon quality of the selection and planning process, this section scores high.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a Logic Model and Fidelity of Implementation Measures to use to plan and operate its projects. The plans however do not specifically address each LEA participating in the consortium. Rather the goals and outcomes are for the consortium overall. Also, the outcomes are not depicted in annual increments. Rather the final outcome is only provided.

Overall, the Project Implementation Plan supports the applicant's reform proposal and is strong. The plan will serve as a positive mechanism to ensure that the students are served effectively using the strategies identified in the proposal. Each of the five project areas is described in depth and the components in each are convincing in the variety and comprehensiveness of the approaches. Focus is on both the student and the educator. For example: Personalized Learning Environment (Project 1) consists of the following components: leadership academies, distance learning, varied learning environments, technology training, STEM Network, Common Core, project-based curriculum, Parent engagement, STARS program, mentoring, job shadowing, Telling the Story program, Student senate, and a virtual art gallery. For each of the other projects, a detailed listing of the individual components is also provided and described articulating a comprehensive approach to implementation of the proposal.

The applicant clearly describes the current conditions and work in the districts and how the ARI projects will build on and enhance these efforts using multiple supports, activities and models.

Included in the application is a plan for Project Implementation of each of the components of the five projects. The plan includes goals and specific detailed activities. The plan includes timelines that begin immediately and many of which are described as "ongoing". More specific timelines would strengthen the plan. The deliverables are included in the plan although quantitative measures are not always specified. For each activity a responsible party is identified. The plan represents a credible approach to success even though the deliverables are not always measurable, rather words such as "increase, deepen understanding" are used. Quantitative measures would strengthen the plan. Overall, the plan addresses the implementation to the participating districts and schools and identifies specific strategies to scale-up the activities within the participants.

The overall plan to implement the grant initiatives is credible to reach its grant outcome goals although the deliverables are not always measurable. Therefore, the score for this section is in the top of the high range.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The performance goals are included as a whole for the 17 consortium districts. Individual district goals are not specifically identified. This lack of district-level data does not meet the selection criteria which requires data for each participating LEA. Additionally, data for subgroups are not provided other than for "low-income" students. These data tables are incomplete in that the subgroups, as defined in this notice, are not displayed. The applicant does not identify any state ESEA flexibility for limited subgroup identification to only "low income".

The consortium goals for summative assessments are not detailed by grade or subject area consistently. Rather student outcomes are provided using grades 3 and 5 in Math and Literacy and combined grades 6-8 in Math only and grade 8 in Literacy only. End-of-course assessments will be used for grade 11 (Math only) and grade 10 (Literacy only). Combining grade spans (6-8) and lack of subject area data by grade does not provide sufficient detail to evaluate the progress of individual grade levels and subject areas.

For decreasing achievement gaps, the applicant meets the requirement of conducting a comparison with the highest performing subgroup ("white") within the consortium as a whole. The focus of decreasing the gap is for "low-income" students as compared to the "white" subgroup. Again, the goals are for the consortium as a whole. No individual district data is provided. These goals appear to be achievable for the consortium overall.

For graduation and college enrollment goals, they are also presented by the consortium overall. The low-income subgroup is not used for college enrollment rates. The graduation rates are achievable for the low-income subgroup going from 89.54% to 94.29% at the end of the grant period. For college enrollment, the consortium had an impressive 12.5% gain from 2012 to 2013. However, the goals going forward are modest only going up 2.6% over four years. These goals for college enrollment are not ambitious, although achievable.

For each of the data tables, the applicant identifies baseline and goals using specified percentages of achievement. For example in the goal for summative assessments, the increases are specified as 21.7%, 16%, and 18.8%. While these increases seem impressive, some of the actual goals are modest. For example, for grade 3 math, the goal of a 21.7% increase is projected. The baseline proficiency is at 34.1% in 2013 reaching a proficiency rate of only 39.9% in four years. This may be achievable but is not ambitious.

Because the performance measures are overall and not provided by district, the outcomes are not particularly complete and thorough. District measures would strengthen the proposal by having data to evaluate the implementation level. Also, without the individual district information, the goal of increased equity for students will not be known. The goals range from modest to ambitious and achievable. Therefore, the score for this section is in the mid-medium range.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The lead agency of the consortium has a history of managing educational grants. The application states that the grant-funded programs met or surpassed program objectives, although this evidence is not specifically provided.

The consortium's record of improving student outcomes over the past four years is provided as a whole. Individual district data is not provided. There is reference to Gap Group Proficiency Rate increases in certain districts and positive results for schools participating in the PETLL program, although the identity of all the districts and schools is not specified in the evidence.

Although the application includes data sets from each of the 17 participating districts, the data sets are not using consistent criteria across the board. Rather, these data sets show a variety of program successes such as access to dual credit courses, gap scores, ACT scores, and college readiness.

The reforms in the two lowest-performing schools are described. These particular schools both achieved gains. To address the needs of low-performing schools, a Framework for Continuous Improvement (PETLL) was developed in 2011. A pilot was launched in 17 schools resulting in positive gains. The PETLL framework is included in the application and the

outcomes are provided for the pilot schools. PETLL will be used as one of the strategies in this proposal.

The applicant describes a variety of methods to make student performance data available to parents (face-to-face, home visits, workshops, trainings and a web portal). In addition, the state's Open House data system is available for teachers, parents and administrators. The applicant intends to broaden access to existing systems and develop a new system - Community Web Portal. For educators, data is already available through the state's data system. The applicant does not specifically address accessibility of data for students although they too have access via the state Open House data system. Student performance data access will be enhanced through the development and implementation of the Community Web Portal. Student performance data is available now and will be enhanced with the portal component.

To demonstrate reforms in its low-performing schools, the applicant shows selected successes in student outcomes throughout the consortium districts. Evidence is included in the application by providing specific examples of the work with these lowest-performing schools. The reform efforts are likely to be enhanced with the PETLL framework since the pilot has shown some progress in student outcomes.

The score for this section is in the top of the high range losing points due to the lack of individual student outcome data by district/school rather than that provided by the overall consortium.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

According to the applicant, school-level expenditures are made available to the public for each of the 101 schools participating in the consortium. This information includes personnel salaries at the school level for instruction and support, personnel salaries for instructional staff only, personnel salaries for teachers only and non-personnel expenditures.

The information is communicated in a variety of ways, such as Board of Education meetings, school based decision making meetings, on school and district web sites, annual District Data Profiles, and the Open House portal. These methods of communication are extensive.

The applicant intends to publish the data on its Community Web Portal for the participating schools. The Portal will be developed as part of this proposal.

Evidence of the school-level data is not provided as an example in the application to document the transparency of investments. Therefore, the level of transparency could not be confirmed without evidence showing examples of the required school-level expenditures. As a result of this lack of evidence, the score for this section is in the low end of the medium range.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes the state context of new and existing statutes governing public education. A 2012 state law provides districts with an opportunity to apply to the state department of education for exemptions from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions as well as for local board policy waivers. This state law is a district innovation statute allowing districts to create new systems for modifying existing teaching systems such as moving from one-size-fits-all approaches, allowing for students to design their own learning, ensuring that students have access to learning materials outside of school, and defining new outcomes of measuring student progress and mastery.

The consortium districts are in the process of developing exemption plans to submit to the state. An example of such an exemption is the school calendar. The applicant does not give any indication of exemption needs specific to the individual participating districts.

The state department of education's support of the application is evident. Their review is specific to this proposal and takes a position of support of the contents and focus. The state department of education issued a reply to the applicant in response to their review of the application. The reply confirmed the 10-day submission requirement and made specific comment to each of the sections of the application. The state department replied that the plan is "ambitious in nature but achievable given the history of successful action in the region and the excellent collaboration in place".

The conditions at the state level do not interfere with and actually support the successful implementation of the proposal and the consortium lead is working with the individual districts to identify barriers. Therefore, the score for this section is high.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	14

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes the planning process for the proposal. The 2012 RTTD plan was perfected during monthly meetings of the district superintendents and a design team was established. The process is comprehensive and was created to ensure broad input and development.

The design team held events to solicit input of stakeholders using surveys, focus groups, community forums and electronic information sharing. Over 7,000 students and 1,600 teachers provided input. Evidence is provided in the application of the student and teacher responses. The survey is in-depth and designed to obtain valuable and useful information.

Staff at each school meet at a minimum of three times to discuss the proposal and provide input. There were also 33 regional community forums held. The number of meetings with multiple stakeholders provides convincing evidence of a high level of engagement.

The applicant met with the school staff in each of the participating schools. Two of the districts operate with a collective bargaining association. In these districts, the teacher association presidents were directly involved. The signatures of these presidents are included in the application. Overall, the teacher support is documented for each of the other districts with a collective support rate of 95%. All of the districts had a support rate that exceeded 70%. The teacher and union agreement presents evidence of support for the proposal.

There are over 150 letters of support that are provided as documentation of key stakeholder engagement and support in the application. There is also evidence of letters of support from multiple mayors. However, it is unclear if there are other mayors in the districts participating in the consortium. Evidence is not included in the application to confirm that their input was solicited.

There is also evidence in the application of the comments made by the state. The comments by the state are specific to each section of the application. The letter expresses its support of the proposal.

The applicant states that input was used to develop the application. However it is not clear if and how the application was revised based upon this feedback.

Overall, there was a high level of stakeholder engagement and input resulting in a score for this section in the high range losing a point for the lack of information about the revision process and question about the engagement/support of mayors from all the participating districts.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	**20**	**18**

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Plan for Learning is strong and addresses the strategies to serve the students in the consortium. The deliverables, however, are not always measurable and there are no annual targets rather a single outcome. Other components of a high-quality plan are evident.

There is strong evidence to support the engagement and empowerment of students and parents. The applicant identifies project-based learning (STARS), as the means to engage students to better understand the value of learning to reach their goals. To engage parents, the plan is to host 16 annual workshops across the consortium. Additionally, all stakeholders will have access to the web portal to gain information about the grant projects. A mentoring program will also be used and will be based on the Individual Learning Plans. This will occur in grades 6-12. It is not clear what strategies will be used for K-5 students.

A strength to the project-based learning model is the support to teachers by the curriculum/instructional coaches to enhance and personalize learning for students. The learning modules will be differentiated depending on the different level of student achievement.

To understand how to structure student learning, expanded curriculum opportunities and a distance learning network will be established. Also, Individual Learning Plans will be implemented. It is not clear if the templates for these plans are already developed or actually in place already. An example is not provided as evidence of a sample plan. Additionally, although a common curriculum will be developed across the consortium, it is not included in the Learning Plan.

Through the project-based learning, students are expected to gain deep learning experiences of academic interest. It is unclear if this strategy will be used for the elementary school students.

Distance learning and mentoring serves as the strategy to expose students to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives. This is geared to middle and high school students only.

Problem-based learning will address mastery of content and skills; although, it is not clear what grades will be served. A personalized sequence of learning will be accomplished using project-based learning using the STARS program. This model uses a community problem for students to solve. The student team will work together to identify a particular challenge to address. Also, a variety of instructional approaches will be available to students, such as: entry at different instructional levels, trajectory-based curriculum, blended classrooms, etc.

The quality and variety of content and curriculum will be obtained using Next Generation Classroom technology. There is evidence in the application to document expanded opportunities and high-level content across the districts in the consortium. Through the use of this technology, districts will be able to share courses via technology. The courses are aligned with the content standards and updated frameworks will be developed. This will assure the rigor of the content.

Efforts to engage students in duel credit opportunities are planned. The 1-to-1-technology program will be implemented in all grade levels. A supplemental program for struggling students is to be utilized for middle and high school students. A program for the elementary students is not defined.

Individual student data, formative and summative, will be utilized. The applicant does not define a specific timeline for this to occur, rather states that it will be frequent. The applicant addresses teachers and leaders without providing information about students and parents.

All students will have E-portfolios for information about their own learning recommendations. It is not clear if the template for this is developed and/or if it is already being implemented.

To address accommodations for high-need students, the applicant will be using the WIN Career Readiness Coursework at the high school level. The WIN Learning program addresses the necessary foundational skills for college and career-readiness. This strategy can accommodate special education and limited English proficiency students. However, interventions for the middle and elementary-level students are not described.

Training and support will be provided to students using a current web-based program. They will also receive support via the mentor program. It is not clear if all participating students in grades 6-12 will have a mentor.

The applicant presents a detailed plan to enhance student learning. However, there are some areas that are not fully articulated and described especially relative to the elementary grade spans. As a result the score for this section is in the mid-high range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	19

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Plan for Teaching and Leading provides adequate detail to accomplish the goal of developing its educators. The high-quality plan would be stronger if the deliverables were measurable and if there were annual targets included.

The plan includes activities to increase the number of students receiving instruction from an effective educator. In addition to on-going professional development, the strategies include tuition supports and work with partners such as Institutions of Higher Education and Teach for America.

The applicant describes the training to support educators using job-embedded professional development, train-the-trainer model, and a teacher academy with the support of coaches.

Educators will be engaged in sufficient training to ensure that they are equipped to implement the strategies of the proposal. Content and instruction will be adapted by integrating technology into instruction and project-based learning. Coaching will also be provided. Measures of student progress will be available on the ARI data portal. Support to educators for this strategy will occur from the data analysts. Improving educator effectiveness will be achieved by enhancing and extending the state's teacher evaluation system. These enhancements are in the areas of observation by an instructional leader and peers, a leadership institute and self-reflection. This is a strength to the application.

Since student growth will be a component of the teacher evaluation, steps are taken to improve individual teacher effectiveness using this data. The applicant also has an initiative to address teachers in non-tested subjects and grades. This will help to assure that all educators are held accountable based on student outcomes.

Also to improve teacher effectiveness, coaches and the PETLL system will be used. Mentors may also be assigned to educators to provide valuable feedback to enhance their effectiveness.

The consortium already has access to systems to provide them with actionable information. The applicant has a variety of

methods to achieve this goal. Additionally, in an effort to ensure high-quality resources, exemplary teachers will be used to develop quality core units. The applicant intends on using the next generation classroom model to deliver this professional development across the consortium. Educators will also participate in Communities of Professional Practice at their schools and also across the consortium.

To match student needs with appropriate resources, the applicant will enhance the RtI training for educators. Teachers will provide monitoring assessments of students however the frequency is not specified. The PETLL system will serve to inform teacher practice using classroom observations and small group discussions.

School and district leaders will also receive support. This will occur with national mentors four days each year.

Professional development, train-the-trainer, professional learning communities and job-embedded professional learning are strong strategies to address increasing student achievement and closing achievement gaps. The six professional development clusters will be used to improve teacher effectiveness and are included as evidence in the application.

The applicant sufficiently addresses and describes its approach to ensure that leaders have sufficient training, policies, tools, data and resources for its leadership teams. Specifically, national mentors will work with the ARI Leadership to collaborate. Additionally, work will continue to refine, enhance and implement the teacher, principal and superintendent evaluation systems using a variety of methods such as observation by an instructional leader, peer observation, professional growth using a leadership institute, a self-reflection model and mentoring. Additionally, work will occur to measure student growth in non-tested subjects and grades.

The applicant has a strong plan to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective educators. The plan is clearly articulated and includes the elements of a high-quality plan such as: goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. The applicant uses a variety of methods to increase equity for students. These strategies include recruitment, targeted college courses, Teach for America, tuition supports, data, professional development, and coaches. The deliverables would be stronger with more measurable outcomes.

Overall, the teaching and learning plan is comprehensive and detailed resulting in a high score, losing a point for the lack of measurable and annual deliverable for all activities.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	**15**	**12**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies is provided in the application. It possesses many of the elements that constitute a high-quality plan such as goals, activities and responsible parties. Missing in the plan; however, are specific timelines (for example: "on-going" is used), and deliverables that are not measurable (for example: "district leadership has opportunities to learn from each other").

The participating districts are members of the Appalachian Innovations Collaborative (AIC), which is a regional advisory council whose goal is to "improve the quality of life in our home communities." As part of this collaborative, the 17 participating districts will address changes in their central office governance to address the implementation of the components of the proposal. The lead partner of the consortium will provide coaches to district administrators on Educator Effectiveness, Instructional Technology and Career and College Readiness in an effort to develop a collegial environment at each of the districts. This is a comprehensive strategy to address central office support.

To address flexibility and autonomy at the school level, the applicant will establish a council of School Based Decision Making, an ARI leadership team (both consisting of district leadership), and will work with local and national school board associations. The goal is to address changes and build support at the schools as the projects are being implemented. It is unclear however how these efforts will interface with the individual leadership teams at the school level to ensure sufficient autonomy.

Students participating in this consortium will be given opportunities to earn credits based on mastery. Teachers will be provided with training on methods to accomplish this model. Efforts will occur at the school level and also opportunities will be available at local colleges. The consortium has a plan to work to re-vision the awarding of academic credits for students using a variety of options. Included in these options is the use of multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery such as independent study, testing out and other methods such as educational travel, distance and on-line learning, internships, mentoring and service learning. The applicant already has several projects that can be used for this purpose. This provides

a positive approach to addressing credit flexibility.

To address adaptable and accessible learning resources and practices, the applicant intends on using project-based learning and an Individual Learning Plan. Communities of Professional Practice will also be initiated to address the individual needs of students using teacher professional development. The ARI Professional Development Plan is provided as evidence of addressing these practices to facilitate personalized learning environments.

Overall, this section scores in the low-high range as the overall plan is credible, losing points for not including key elements of a high-quality plan.

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

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A plan to support project implementation through district and school infrastructure is addressed. The applicant will increase access to content via technology devices and establish lending libraries for students who cannot afford such devices. Additionally, a web-based instructional and curricular database will be developed. It is unclear how all stakeholders will have access to the web, especially those with limited incomes. Access is important to provide all students with equity and opportunities to use learning resources. Also, the availability of these resources for the elementary grade spans is not clearly articulated.

To provide sufficient technical support, each district will have a Data Analyst to collect, analyze, and disseminate individual student data. The proposal also includes a system of technical support. This design is a strength to the application as it provides the expertise of data analysts to supply needed information to educators and students.

All the major data systems (ARI Instructional and Curricular Database, Open House, Individual Learning Plans and e-Portfolios) used in this proposal are in an open format. These systems are also interoperable. Because these systems are accessible, it will allow parents and students to use this valuable information.

A strength to the application is the overall plan to implement LEA practices, policies, rules, data and infrastructure. However, the plan does not include all the high-quality elements such as measurable deliverables and defined timelines.

The score for this section is in the low-high range losing points for limited information about the elementary grade spans, web access for those with limited incomes, for deliverables that are not specifically measurable, and timelines that are broad.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The continuous improvement process includes a specific operational plan - the High-Quality Plan for Continuous Improvement - to review and assess the management of the grant. The process is based on the Fidelity of Implementation Measures, for each of the five projects, which have been established and presented as evidence.

Between both of these tools to manage the grant and assess the implementation of the five projects, the elements of a high-quality plan are included: goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties. In the Fidelity of Implementation Measures, multiple measures for meeting fidelity would be stronger if measures for each year of the grant were identified.

The applicant has a solid plan to monitor and measure the quality of the investments of the grant using its evaluator, the RAND Corporation along with an AIC leadership team (which includes all participating districts) and an AIC Advisory Board. The evaluator will prepare dashboard reports for on-going evaluation. Additionally, quarterly and annual reports and briefings will be prepared to evaluate progress in meeting the performance measures. Other methods to ensure fidelity of implementation include a Cross-district Communities of Professional Practice and College and Career Readiness Teams. The applicant has a coherent Communication and Engagement Plan that includes strategies to publicly share information on the quality of its investments. These strategies include formal and informal methods; such as, a web site, newsletters, parent and community workshops and forums.

Because this is a consortium of 101 schools in 17 districts, a review of student academic performance at the school level is important. The applicant plans to conduct academic reviews on a semi-annual basis. A more frequent review schedule

would strengthen the focus on the participating schools.

Overall, the plan is strong on the monitoring and measuring process as evidenced in the two tools used in the proposal for this purpose.

The score for this section is in the high range due to the comprehensive and coherent high-quality plan to manage the grant, losing a point for the lack of annual measures.

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

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a high-quality plan - Ongoing Communication and Engagement - to ensure that stakeholders are informed of the implementation of the proposal via the ARI Consortium Leadership Team. A variety of strategies are planned such as a web site, parent and community workshops, trainings and forums and the ARI Community Portal. The plan for ongoing communication and engagement includes the elements of a high-quality plan: goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties. For example, one of the plan's activities is for parent and community workshops. The timeline is quarterly and the deliverable is to provide feedback on the project. The responsible party is the ARI director.

Due to the overall quality of the communication activities and plan, the score for this section is at the top of the high range.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The performance measures identified by the applicant are adequate to address the implementation of the proposal. The measures, however, range from being incomplete, ambitious, modest, and achievable.

The applicant will be using state academic measures, college-readiness (ACT) and attendance for the social-emotional measure. The applicant provides a very brief rationale for the selection of the ACT measures as based upon "nation-wide acceptance". Also provided, as evidence in the application is a justification for the attendance measure citing documented research.

The annual targets are incremental over the grant period. Using these measures along with the Fidelity of Implementation Measures plan, are sufficient to track implementation and student success. The applicant has established a system of monthly reviews utilizing the external evaluator.

For the educator effectiveness tables, the consortium is evaluated as a whole, all 17 districts and 101 schools together. Because these results are combined as such, it will be difficult to determine and assess student equity in the quality/effectiveness of their instructors. The goals are achievable for the effective teachers reaching 90% at the end of the project period from a baseline of 75%.

The academic performance measures are only presented for the consortium as a whole. There are no district-level measures. Such measures would strengthen the grant to ensure that the districts are progressing. Small district outcomes could be masked by the data of the totals of 17 districts.

The data tables are incomplete in that the subgroups, as defined in this notice, are not displayed. The applicant does not identify any state ESEA flexibility for subgroup identification. Data is presented for the academic performance measures by the overall student population and includes only one subgroup (low-income). Additionally, in several instances, the low-income subgroup is actually not provided (attendance for K-3, 4-8 and 9-12). Low-income baseline data for the ACT grades 8 and 11-12 is missing. Therefore, these targets may not be reliable. The academic performance targets are modest for grade 3 math. The baseline is 34.1% only going up to 39.9% at the end of the project period. For the 8th grade "all students" population, the target goes from 28% to 46.2%, which is more ambitious. Although for the 10th grade, the targets are more modest going from 28.4% to only 38.6% at the end of the grant period. Considering the proposal components, the targets are achievable.

The frequency of the data analysis is sufficient. The external evaluator will be providing feedback to the ARI leadership and to the participating districts. Data will be tracked quarterly and summative data annually. The applicant will review the Fidelity of Implementation Measures on a monthly basis. In addition, the evaluator will be using a variety of data sources as part of the evaluation. This process as described is rigorous, and timely. Because the data is collected at a consortium as a whole the information may not be sufficient for district and school improvement.

The lack of some data, use of grade span measures and lack of district data weakens the application resulting is a score in the high range losing one point.

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

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Using the Continuous Improvement Plan to evaluate the effectiveness, the specific activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties are evident. The plan identifies a number of activities that specifically addresses the evaluation of investments. For example, the ARI Leadership Team will meet (activity) monthly (timeline) and the deliverables are "minutes to include decisions, review of key indicators and formal tools". The responsible party is the Leadership Team. Each of the activities is clearly articulated and is of high-quality.

Further, the applicant describes using their leadership team and their external evaluator to work with the USDE's national evaluator to further evaluate the program.

Because the plan is of high-quality, the score for this section is high.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant shows that all funds to implement this program are from the federal funds from this grant for a total of $30 million. No funds from other sources are identified. As evidence, the applicant clearly displays the one-time investments for the project totaling $2.5 million.

The budget is for the five major components including the management and evaluation plan, which are prorated across the five components. The budgets are reasonable and sufficient to provide the identified components for the projects. These are:

1. Accessible data systems ($1.5 million)
2. Next generation classrooms ($7 million)
3. College and career readiness ($3 million)
4. Personalized learning ($11 million)
5. Effective teachers and leaders ($6 million)

The overall rationale is to "implement personalized learning environments, build 21st Century classroom and improve teacher effectiveness." A thoughtful detailed rationale is provided for each of the five components separately. For each cost, a clear description is provided in the budget along with a cost estimate rationale that sufficiently provides the details to understand the costs.

The budget overall is clear and understandable resulting in a high score.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a Sustainment Plan to identify the strategies/components that will continue beyond the grant period. The applicant expects that the components of the projects will be institutionalized within the schools and community. Also, the proposal expects to continue the use of state-level initiatives (Open House, CIITS, educator effectiveness system).

The Sustainment Plan includes goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties that are specified for each of the five projects of this proposal. Even though the plan has the components of a high-quality plan, the content does not specifically address the efforts to sustain the projects beyond the grant period. For example, for the personalized learning project, an activity is, "during the grant period teachers will have participated in multiple learning opportunities…". The timeline is January 2014 ongoing and the deliverable is a student individualized learning plan. This is confusing because the plan does not address how the activity will actually be sustained post grant. Rather, the plan addresses implementation

of the components of the projects, not sustainability.

The applicant states they will continue to use its strategic partnerships in serving the districts in the consortium. The sustainability plan does not address this goal. The lead agency is a service provider to school districts and plans to continue components without providing details other than to say they have experience in managing grants.

Due to the overall quality of the details in the sustainability plan, the score for this section is in the high range losing points for undefined deliverables and broad timelines.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**7**

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

For the Competitive Priority, the applicant plans to include two components using partnerships:

1. Wellness - physical and mental health

2. Kindergarten-readiness

These components were selected based upon an analysis of the needs of the consortium districts. Data is provided in the application to support the selection of these components. The needs and assets of the schools and communities are aligned with the goals of the partnerships. This is strong because the components are directly focused on identified needs.

For the wellness component, school-based clinics will be established using two health care center partners. Notably, in addition to students, families and school staff will have access to services. Workshops will be held for parents and stakeholders to engage them in the implementation and use of the wellness clinics. The applicant states that such a clinic is now operating in four of the school districts. Results are provided as evidence of success. This is a convincing strategy to increase attendance of both students and teachers and also provides support to families. It is not clear how the medical/mental heath services will be funded other than for Medicaid-eligible students and families. There is insufficient information to determine the actual number of student and family participants and thus the scope of this strategy.

For the kindergarten readiness program, the applicant will partner with a non-profit - Forward in the Fifth. This agency will provide professional development and training to the area early childhood centers. No costs for this strategy are budgeted in the application.

There are eight population-level desired results specified and directly align with the two components. There are also four performance measures in total. The desired results are provided for the consortium as a whole. No results are specified at the district level. Because the data is provided for the consortium as a whole, analysis of the full impact of the strategies cannot be measured accurately at the district level.

The applicant's external evaluator, along with the project's leadership team, will track the indicators and work to improve them over time. The project's external evaluator, on a quarterly basis, will routinely assess the progress of these components. The decision-making process will occur at the quarterly advisory meetings. The structure and process is sufficient to review the implementation to improve results at the management level.

The scale-up plan is to expand to the two other ARI districts that are not participating in this consortium application. The scale-up plan is brief. It only states that it will work with the other districts once the program has proven to be successful and if resources are available.

How the partnerships will integrate education and other services is not clearly described only to say that skill-building activities will be provided.

The applicant has already conducted a strong community and school needs assessment, which supports the implementation of the two strategies. Additionally, the applicant plans to conduct quarterly advisory meetings of the AIR and AIC partnership as its decision-making entity. However, the applicant does not describe activities to build the capacity of the staff in the participating schools by providing them with tools and supports to address these needs. Also absent from the application is the process to assist school staff to select, implement and evaluate the supports and routinely assess the progress of the strategies.

For the four performance measures, the outcomes are also presented by the consortium as a whole. For example, for kindergarten-readiness, all students in the 17 districts are included in the performance measure. The goal is to increase

readiness eight percentage points each year. However, the desired results state it is to "increase kindergarten readiness by 10% by 2015-16". This is inconsistent.

For the performance measure to improve teacher attendance, no baseline or targets are provided. Also, there are two performance measures relative to student absenteeism listed in the same measure. As a result, the targets are inconsistent. For this measure the applicable populations are displayed by grade span (K-3, 4-8, 9-12). No individual district performance measures are identified. This lack of differentiation will not yield results to address the individual issues in the district. If the performance measure baselines and targets were accepted as consistent and accurate, the outcomes would be considered ambitious and achievable.

Overall, the two partnership programs are appropriate to the needs of the participating districts. The score for this section is in the medium range losing points for data inconsistencies, weak scale-up plan, lack of outcomes for individual districts, and lack of supports for school staff.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The proposed plan is well designed to provide needed services to a large number of districts, schools, students, educators and families. The reform vision is comprehensive and coherent and the approach to implement personalized learning environments for its participating students is sound.

The application is aligned with and builds on the four core educational assurance areas. For standards and assessments, the applicant will build on and expand the training for the implementation of the core curriculum content standards and the state's technology and assessment systems. For data systems, work to support the state's Open House system will occur for the consortium participants. Work will occur with educators to effectively utilize the data collected. For effective teachers and principals, the applicant utilizes the state's system and provides enhanced support to the districts' educators. Work building on the efforts to turn around low-performing schools is addressed. The applicant will utilize the existing PETLL framework, which has shown some success in raising student achievement results. This framework will be used for each of the low-performing schools to focus on an in-depth school analysis to build greater capacity in teaching, developing leadership expertise and organizing learning.

Overall, the application coherently and comprehensively addresses how the five components of the proposal are directly aligned with the assurance areas. The application includes a strong approach to implementation guided by its high-quality plans to ensure fidelity of implementation. The application design and strategies serve to meet the academic needs of participating students; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps for the low-income subgroup; and increase the rates at which students graduate. Therefore, this application meets Absolute Priority 1.

	Available	Score
Total	210	182