



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0148TX-1 for Region 5 Education Service Center

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Although the applicant provides a comprehensive description of its gaps and weaknesses in services, the applicant does not articulate comprehensive reform vision. Further details are needed with regard to the applicant's approach in addressing the identified needs. Further details are also needed with regard to the classroom experience for both students and teachers. The applicant formed a consortium consisting of four small, geographically isolated school districts. The applicant identifies challenges including: poverty, low levels of education, high levels of unemployment and low levels of student performance. Other weaknesses include: budget deficits, geographic isolation, low levels of funding for technology, and limited professional development opportunities. The applicant describes some of its work with regard to the core assurance areas. With regard to the adoption of standards, the applicant plans to administer a new assessment designed to assess college readiness. With regard to data systems, the applicant plans to use a number of web based applications to promote data driven decision making. applicant makes reference to improving the technology infrastructure to support the use of additional digital learning tools. The applicant describes its data reporting system that incorporates a variety of useful components to capture student data. With regard to effective educators, the applicant plans to create a team of experienced turnaround specialists. With regard to turning around the lowest achieving schools, the applicant plans to provide access to online professional development opportunities and to conduct a school level needs assessment. The applicant plans to utilize 3D Triage Teams to address the needs of the targeted school districts. The applicant plans to provide access to consultants to provide coaching to teachers. The applicant does not sufficiently describe the applicant's experience in turning around lowest performing schools. All of the activities described with regard to its lowest performing schools are activities to be completed once the project is funded and implemented. Further details are needed as to how this proposed project builds upon existing work in this area. The applicant does not provide a comprehensive description of its approach to increase equity through the provision of student support based upon academic interests.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant selected the school districts to participate because they were the lowest performing districts within Region 5. The applicant provides a list of the schools that will participate coupled with the percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch at each school. The applicant plans to serve a total of 2,244 students with an average 62% of the students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. The applicant also identifies the number of students in poverty and those who have high needs. The applicant provides a table that aligns the identified needs with the project component designed to address such. The applicant identified needs such as a: lack of professional development opportunities, lack of updated technologies, lack of training on using existing resources; low levels of student achievement, and geographic isolation. The applicant's approach to addressing its needs include: providing 31 days of training, purchasing portable technology devices for student use, implementation of student portfolios and the creation of online professional learning communities.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>To a limited extent, the applicant describes an implementation plan for the provision of project components including:</p>		

professional development; evidenced-based practices; technology; and teacher/administration evaluation. The applicant lists its outcome goals. However, they are not stated in measurable terms. The implementation plan also does not list the persons responsible for implementation. The tasks needed to achieve the desired outcomes are not sufficiently described. For example, there are no details provided regarding how the appraisal of the principal will occur. Further details are needed with regard to the informal observations of teachers and how the results will be translated into meaningful reform. With regard to the professional development plan, the applicant merely lists some of the topics to be provided. The applicant does not describe how it will track whether the knowledge conveyed in professional development sessions will be translated into meaningful reform in the classroom. Although the applicant makes reference to students having access to distance learning courses from Angelina College and Lamar Institute of Technology, the applicant does not provide a description of the courses or the costs associated with taking these courses. The applicant lists Response to Intervention as a project service, but does not describe the necessary milestones to be achieved in order to successfully implement this project component. Further details are needed with regard to how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform beyond the participating schools are needed.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's vision may lead to some levels of improved student learning and performance. However, further details are needed with regard to how the applicant's vision will result in increased equity. Further clarity is needed with regard to the applicant's presentation of its data. Although numerical raw data is provided, the applicant does not include percentages or the unit of measurement. With respect to the data on decreasing achievement gaps, the applicant has included positive and negative numbers, but with no percentages. Although the applicant provides some data with regard to graduation rates, college enrollment and performance on state tests, the applicant does not sufficiently describe its need to decrease achievement gaps that exist among all subgroups. The applicant provides annual measurable targets for graduation rates and college enrollment which are ambitious and achievable.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Although the applicant has experienced some record of success in improving student achievement, it has not sufficiently demonstrated evidence of a clear record of success for the past four years in both advancing student learning and increasing equity. Data from five schools demonstrate growth in tested grade levels. However, data from three other schools demonstrate inconsistent results regarding student performance on standardized tests. The applicant notes that the overall performance gap for students in poverty at the middle school level has been reduced. On the high school level, graduation rates increased at all schools except for one. The applicant does not provide a comprehensive description of any ambitious and significant reforms that were implemented in its member school districts. Although the applicant provides a chart listing the data driven tools, it does not describe its process for making student data available to stakeholders in order to inform and improve its practice. More disaggregation of data with regard to the subgroups would have strengthened the application.

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

The applicant has demonstrated transparency in its LEA processes, practices and investments. The applicant makes the relevant data regarding its expenditures from state and local funds accessible online and in hard copy at each school. The state requires disclosure of the school level expenditures. The applicant's disclosures include: personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures for both instructional and support staff.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

To a limited extent, the applicant describes its state context for implementing the project. The applicant's overarching purpose is to support school districts and campuses to improve student performance. In doing so, the applicant implements mandates from The Texas Education Agency and the Texas Legislature. The office is organized into divisions

including: administrative leadership, educational technology and media, special education, instructional services, information management and business services. Further details are needed with regard to the applicant's autonomy to implement the project under legal, statutory and regulatory requirements. Further details are needed with regard to whether the applicant has experienced any obstacles to autonomy in order to achieve a personalized learning environment.

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

15

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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

To a somewhat limited extent, the applicant demonstrated evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement. The applicant utilized a project design team that consisted of district representatives, parents, students, and business leaders. The design team met during a two month period. The applicant has attached documentation demonstrating sufficient teacher support for the project. The Burkeville ISD presents signatures representing 100% teacher support for the project. The High Island ISD presents evidence demonstrating that there is 100% teacher support for the project. There is documentation showing 98% teacher support of project from Newton Elementary School of the Newton ISD. There is documentation from Newton MS and HS demonstrating 65% teacher support for the project. There is documentation from the West Hardin CCISD showing 100% teacher support for the project. The applicant has attached approximately 40 letters of support. However, the applicant has attached a Memorandum of Understanding from each member school district.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a high quality plan for learning. The applicant does not list key project tasks, deliverables or the persons responsible for implementation. The applicant also does not provide a timeline. The applicant plans to utilize a Personal Learning Plan for each student. However, the applicant does not provide sufficient details regarding the data that will be used to drive the Personal Learning Plan and the resources/interventions that will be utilized to support each student. The applicant plans to use technology and videoconferencing on the high school level. However, the applicant does not describe the learning experience on the elementary and middle school level. The applicant does not describe sufficient evidence based instructional practices. The applicant makes limited reference to small group instruction, student led learning, and technology infused instruction. The applicant states that it plans to use online instruction but does not provide sufficient details regarding its distance education component. The applicant does not describe any specific, targeted instructional approaches to serve its high need students. The applicant states that teachers will be trained in the use of technology tools, but does not provide sufficient details regarding the implementation of the training component.

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

20

13

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

To a limited extent, the applicant provides a plan to improve teaching and leading. The applicant provides an implementation plan with activities, deliverables and a timeline. However, further details are needed with regard to whether school leaders have access to appropriate training, policies and tools to implement a personalized learning environment. Further details are also needed with regard to principal effectiveness. The applicant merely states that it plans to assess the management skills of principals. Although the applicant plans to provide 246 hours of professional development, the applicant does not fully describe how professional development will result in improvements in practice. The applicant plans to create a database of lesson plans. The applicant describes the two data management systems used in its member districts. Teachers will have access to tools that assist with curriculum mapping. The applicant plans to implement professional learning communities that meet on a monthly basis. The applicant does not provide sufficient information regarding its team of experts that will provide support and training to other educators. Further details are needed with regard to the targeted educators selected to receive assistance. The applicant also does not describe the effectiveness of teachers as it relates to their evaluation systems. With regard to increasing the number of students who receive instruction from highly effective educators, the applicant does not address its plan to ensure adequate staffing in hard to staff areas.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	9
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>To a limited extent, the applicant describes its plan to support project implementation through LEA practices and policies. The applicant describes the role of the Region 5 Education Service Center as serving as the LEA central office. The applicant plans to hire a project director. The applicant plans to develop teams including: Data Analysis and Leadership Effectiveness Team, Academic Performance Team and Family and Community Engagement Team. The schools are governed using site based decision making. The applicant plans to use technology to assist students with disabilities. The applicant does not fully address the LEA's practices, policies and rules with regard to supporting students with disabilities and English Language Learners. The applicant does not fully address how students will demonstrate mastery of standards. The applicant merely mentions that it plans to vary assessments. The applicant does not address the autonomy of its school leadership teams. Further details beyond the applicant's plan to vary assessments are needed with regard to enabling students to demonstrate mastery of standards in multiple ways. Further details are needed with regard to the applicant's plan to allow students to earn credit based on mastery rather than seat time. The applicant merely states that it will allow students to "test out" of courses.</p>		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>To a sufficient extent, the applicant provides a plan that provides the LEA and school infrastructure to support personalized learning. The applicant has an implementation plan that includes: professional development; evidence based practices; educational technology; and evaluation systems for teachers and principals. The plan includes a timeline; however, the dates for most key tasks are too broad to aid in successful project implementation. Further details are needed with regard to the applicant's plan to purchase and distribute student learning devices. The applicant does not describe its rationale for selecting the students/grade levels to receive the digital devices. The applicant describes the state data system that has both business and student applications. The applicant plans to provide coaching sessions and training in order to ensure that students and parents have access to appropriate levels of technical support. The applicant describes that the student portfolio data system will be accessible by parents. The applicant also describes its interoperable data system that houses both business and student applications.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not present a high quality plan for rigorous continuous improvement. The applicant does not list key project tasks, deliverables or a timeline. Further details are needed with regard to how the applicant plans to ensure timely and regular feedback. Further details are also needed to demonstrate how the applicant will measure, monitor and publicly share information. The applicant's plan to measure project effectiveness is somewhat limited. However, the applicant plans to use an external evaluator. The applicant plans to prepare Quarterly Evaluation Reports that include school data, district data and region data. The applicant plans to include a description of the following indicators: academic, school environment, instructional effectiveness and professional development. The applicant plans to utilize an Evaluation Committee.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes its plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders only to a limited extent. The applicant does not provide a timeline, key tasks for deliverable to support its communication and engagement plan. The applicant plans to connect with its stakeholders through websites and mailings. The applicant describes its plan to promote daily communication between students and staff and the project director and staff. The applicant plans to promote communication through bimonthly training and monthly Professional Learning Community</p>		
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meetings.

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

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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents charts illustrating its ambitious and achievable performance measures. For each performance measure, the applicant provides annual targets and its rationale for selecting the measure. The applicant has identified 12 performance measures to assess successful project implementation. The applicant also provides how each performance measure provides rigorous, timely and formative information regarding project implementation.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

To a limited extent, the applicant provides a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. The applicant describes the role of the external evaluator and the data collection specialist. The applicant does not provide sufficient details regarding its formative assessment plan. Further details are needed with regard to how data will be analyzed and which evaluation questions will be measured. The applicant also does not identify sufficient qualitative and quantitative data sources. As written, the evaluation plan will not aid in the determination of successful implementation of project. Further details regarding the alignment of measurable outcomes and evaluation measures are needed.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

To a limited extent, the applicant provides a budget that identifies reasonable and sufficient funds to support project implementation. However, the applicant provides only a brief description of its budget line items. The applicant's description of equipment is vague and lacks specificity. Further details are need with regard to the amount of digital learning devices to be purchased. The applicant's description of contractual fees is also vagues and lacks specificity. Further details are needed with regard to the amount of contractors to be utilized as well as the rate of pay for their performance.

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

10

8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant adequately describes its sustainability plan. The applicant plans to use the train the trainers model to scale to the 33 other districts. The applicant plans to expand partnerships with colleges and mental health agencies. Further details are needed with regard to the potential college partners and potential mental health agency partners. The applicant plans to utilize state funds and Title I funds to sustain the project. Further details are need with regard to any external potential sources of funding. The applicant does not provide a post grant budget to support its sustainability plan.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

To a limited extent, the applicant describes its plan to create a coherent and sustainable partnership. The applicant plans to utilize mental health professionals including a licensed professional counselor and a social worker. The applicant does not identify a partnership with a mental health agency that has expertise in providing, monitoring and supervising the provision of such services. The applicant plans to use the evaluation data to track the progress of subgroups to leverage resources for at risk students. The applicant does not describe its screening process to identify students in need of support. The applicant plans to integrate mental health services into the school data. However, further details are needed

to describe how the applicant will integrate social, emotional and behavioral data with school data. The applicant identifies desired results including: reducing misbehavior and increasing engagement of hard to reach parents. However, the desired results are not well-conceived and thorough. The applicant also does not describe sufficient ambitious performance measures for each desired result. Further details are needed with regard to how the partnership will build the capacity of staff to support them in both identifying the needs of students and engaging parents and families.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a coherent and comprehensive plan that builds upon the core educational assurance areas. The applicant does not provide compelling evidence of its work to build on the core educational assurance area relating to turning around low performing schools. All of the applicant's activities relating to turning around lowest performing schools will be implementing upon project funding. Further details regarding the applicant's existing work in this area is needed. The applicant does not provide high quality plans to significantly improvement learning and teaching. The applicant does not sufficiently describe its strategies, tools and supports. The applicant does not present high quality plans to increase the effectiveness of educators. The applicant's plans to meet the academic needs of each student needs to be further developed. The applicant does not provide compelling evidence of its plan to achieve equity and reduce achievement gaps among all subgroups. The applicant does not sufficiently present a clear record of success in improving student achievement for the past four years as it relates to both advancing student learning and achieving equity. The applicant does not provide a high quality plan for continuous quality improvement nor has it designed an evaluation plan that is likely to effectively measure successful project implementation. The applicant also does not provide sufficient details regarding its partner's integration of social and emotional data with academic data. The applicant's budget is not sufficiently aligned with all project activities and a detailed budget narrative is not provided to justify and clarify all line item expenditures.

Total	210	140
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0148TX-2 for Region 5 Education Service Center

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides some evidence toward articulating its vision of school reform; however, the vision is not comprehensive. What is lacking is clarity of what the vision would look like and the inclusion of specific processes and procedures that would support the implementation of the vision. Programs that will be used and staff involved are articulated, but it is not clear as to what will be different from what is already in place. Further explanation on how the vision would build on its current work; an explanation of a clear and credible approach that increases student learning; and a clearer description of what the classroom experience would be like for students and teachers would have enhanced this application. After reviewing the entire application, it was still challenging to understand exactly what the personalized learning environment vision would look like in action for students and teachers. As a result, the applicant received a score

in the middle range.

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

10

9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant address all of the minimum requirements that should be included for explaining its approach to implementation. There is an explanation of how schools were selected; a list of the participating schools; and total number of participating students. What was not listed specifically in this section was the demographic data of the participating students; however, this information can be found in section A4. The process for selecting schools is appropriate and meets the eligibility requirements. As a result, the applicant recieved a score in the high point range.

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

10

6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides general information that helps the reader draw some conclusions about how it plans to approach school reform in its targeted schools. However, the plan lacks clarity in how it would support district-wide change and support students to meet outcomes where they are currently not demonstrating success. The plan identifies what they plan to implement (do), but not what the specific student outcomes would be as a result of implementing various components of the plan. For example, a chart is included that states new or enhanced activities in the first column; the timeframe/duration in the second column; and expected outcomes in the third column. However, the outcomes don't articulate how student performance will specifically be improved (the effect that they expect the activity to have on student performance). The outcomes seem global in nature. Also, there appears to be a good amount of overlap in the activities based on how this information is reported in the timeframe/duration column; thus, it appears that folks will be pulled out of the classroom often. A clearer format for articulating the information in this column would have been helpful to the reader. Finally, some of the activities state that they will be scheduled as needed, but there is no explanation of how needs will be identified and what the minimum expectation would be; thus, without a clear plan, variability in implementation is likely to occur. Based on the information provided, the applicant recieved a score in the middle range.

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

10

6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes tables that include baseline student data and expected progress over the next fours years, and post-grant. However, it is hard to understand the connection between why the measures were selected and how the expected progress over time was calculated; thus, the reader is not clear if the goals are ambitious. For one of the targeted districts, High Island, there is no baseline data or targets included for decreasing achievement gaps; and there is no explanation for why this information is not included. There are targets included for college enrollment, but no explanation of how the graduation rate targets were identified. The formatting of this section and lack of additional information made it challenging for the reader to clearly understand the district's vision for improving student outcomes. An analysis of the data and an explanation of how the recommended goals for improvement were developed would have enhanced this section. As a result, the applicant recieved a score in the middle point 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	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has included data that shows its record of success for the past four years, including its success with high school graduation rates and college enrollment. In looking at the data for one of the middle schools, they made a 40 percent gain in improvement in one year. What is missing is an explanation of how the applicant closed the gap along with its ability to turn around its persistently low-achieving schools; as well as and explanation of specific strategies that helped them to improve student performance over time. Information that also seems to be lacking is: how data is being made available regularly to students, parents and educators; and the structure and/or procedure for making the data available. A variety of technology programs are or will be used to collect and report data, but there is a lack of information to know how parents and/or students who don't have computers at home can access the information. So, the data included provides clarity on the applicant's record of success, but the plan for making the data available should be further developed. As a result, this section recieved a score in the middle point range.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides information that clearly explains its transparency with processes, practices and investments. All of the required information for this section is available on-line and in hard copy; the information is identifiable by school number. Budget totals for other programs are also available in the same formats. The district addressed the minimum requirement for this section. As a result, the applicant recieved the highest score available for this section.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly describes its states expectations for improving the achievement of its lowest performance students and its goals for supporting this expectations. The State and applicant's goals and expectations are aligned. However, the applicant did not adequetly describe or explain its level of autonomy; and what the programs would look like in action when implemented. Most of what is described is part of the State regulations for supporting student learning. The applicant did not include an explanation for how it would support student learning beyond what is expected that demonstrated its autonomy. Thus this section recieved a score in the middle point range.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant stated who was involved in the development of the proposal, but missed the opportunity to explain the process for how the plan was revised and finalized using ongoing feedback from different stakeholders. The Design Teams (administrators, teachers, parent and student volunteers, and business leaders) only met for two months to highlight needs in their respective communities and brainstormed possible services; however, there is no explanation of what occurred after these two months. The stakeholer engagement process is very weak. The appendix includes letters of support from teachers, community members and businesses, but there is only one letter from a Parent Teacher Organization. This section lacks comprehensive information for how stakeholders were actively engaged in the development and revision of the RTT grant throughout its development. As a result, this section recieved a score in the middle point range.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a wealth of information that clarifies its committment to student learning. It describes a variety of strategies that will be implemted or enhanced to help students maximize learning opportunities. The strategies are resonable and are aligned with the concept of creating a personalized learning environment. With the exception of a lack of clarity in some areas, the applicant does a good job of addressing the criteria for this section. The focus on learning would be provided through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of student personal learning plans with the support of parents and teachers; these are created annually where students create short, mid, and long-range goals which is helpful for students' to assess their progress throughout the year; the plan would be updated two times per year • The creation of an online portfolio where a variety of student projects and other information can be stored; this is helpful to having information in a central location that can be accessed by students, parents, and teachers to see progress over time • Using a variety of assessments (local and state) to assess student progress; the use of multiple data sources provides a good context for determining students mastery of standards • Content standards will be used to develop benchmarks; this ensure the evaluation of mastery based on the standards • Providing a variety of enrichment activities that are technology based; since students will have access to personal learning devices, they will be able to acces these activities beyond the student day • Middle school students would be able to access high school courses, and high school students or other students that demonstrate readiness and mastery can access college courses; this is a way to accelerate learning and not 		

- hold students back that are ready to move on to the next level of content
- Educators will participate in extensive training; however, further information should be included to explain what the training plan would entail for the year and how teacher and student impact would be measured
- Research based interventions will be included; however, further information on what they would be and how they would be implemented is needed
- Strategies for supporting student learning in the classroom are listed; however, they don't appear to be above and beyond what teachers are or should already be doing in the classroom; the strategies don't appear to be high quality
- Mobile technology labs on buses will be used as a means for students to use time wisely if they have to travel more than thirty minutes to get to school; however, an explanation of expectations for students and the roll-out plan is not included
- Online credit high school courses will be available to students which is great, along with a credit recovery option; this allows flexibility to learning
- A needs assessment will be done in the first year of the grant to identify student strengths and needs and students will be assessed bi-weekly which is a good practice so that instruction can be targeted and aligned to students' current performance
- Some information is provided for allowing students to access to advanced coursework; but, further clarity should be provided on what enrichment and acceleration would look like K-12 and how students would access a variety of opportunities

More information is needed to understand how specific accommodations or strategies will be implemented to support high needs students. In terms of providing training and support to students to ensure they understand how to use the tools provided, the plan is not well developed. Instead, broad information is provided. After reviewing the application for more information, the reader still did not have a clear picture of what support to students would look like; thus, a clear outline of deliverables and timetables would have been helpful.

As a result of the above, this section received a score in the low to high point range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	12
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In reviewing the information presented to support teaching and leading, the reader gets a good sense that the district is dedicated to professional development and makes good attempts at trying to consider the needs of teachers and administrators as it articulates its plan; however, some components of teaching and leading require further development. The applicant attempts to address teaching and leading through the following:

- Partnering with national consultants with expertise in turning around low performing schools; however, there is not an explanation for how the experts will be found and how they will determine if they are truly "experts"; further information on the areas of expertise that the district is seeking should be included, along with a back-up plan if they can't find experts or don't provide the services that they expect to receive
- An educational consultant will be used to provide turn-key training; however, the criteria for selecting the consultant and evaluating their services is missing
- Technology is explained for providing training to staff and it is the major tool; however, there is no back up plan for dealing with the technology when it does not function as expected; heavy reliance on technology to deliver professional development is an issue knowing that glitches can occur
- The district plans to implement a trainer of trainers model, but fails to articulate its plan for what this will look like during the RTT grant and beyond the grant period
- Professional Learning Communities will be implemented as a great strategy to get teachers to have ongoing discussions about their practices, what's working, gain ideas, etc.; this is to be the main structure for supporting teachers with adapting content; however, the strategies that the PLCs will discuss seem typical of daily good first instruction and not high quality strategies
- The creation of student action plans with specific goals and outcomes will be used by teachers and students to measure progress; teachers will receive training on how to administer ongoing formative assessments to measure student performance and will be expected to make this part of their regular practice
- The applicant mentions 13 web based products that are part of the data management system; however, there is very little information provided to determine if they are high quality products
- A team approach by district leaders and outside experts will be used during the first four months of the grant period to assess teacher and leader needs; this is a good strategy for aligning a variety of resources and determining next steps for support; however, there is no information included for how the teacher and administrator evaluation system will be used as a process for improvement
- A chart is included that includes actions, timeline, deliverables and persons responsible, but it is not clear as to

which parts of the plan are dedicated to building teacher and leadership capacity; the outline addresses a variety of areas

Also, some information in this section was repetitive of what was in section C1 and didn't apply to teaching and leading. As a result of the above, this section received a score in the middle point range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	11

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a good overview of its structure for supporting personalized learning. It has identified a lead central office which is also part of the district structure. It has articulated quality practices for supporting its schools that include: On-going training for reading and math teachers around content and how to support varying student needs; hiring a full-time Project Director to oversee all grant related activities and facilitate communication with each of the participating districts; creating a Data Analysis and Leadership effectiveness team, Improving Academic Performance Team, and a Family Engagement Team to work with experts in school improvement to conduct on-going and an interactive needs assessment; creating an action plan based on needs assessments done at each school to help equitably distribute resources; hiring a technology coordinator to upgrade the existing infrastructure and provide training; and hiring a grant manager to manage and monitor the partnerships that are part of the grant and support the project director.

The leadership teams will not have issues with flexibility and autonomy since site based management has been mandatory in the district since 1992; this mandate allows decisions to be made about schedules, calendars, etc. with guidance from district leaders. Thus, the personal learning environment can be implemented based on the unique structures of each school.

A good system that the district has in place is its data management system for tracking student progress. It includes a portfolio system that compiles student information and provides teachers and administrators with a variety of information. The system will be used as a way to determine which students can "test out" of coursework and move to an accelerated path. The applicant states that students will be recommended for pathways, but first must show that they have mastered the content which is a good expectation. The inclusion of options for how students could demonstrate mastery in multiple ways beyond what already exists would have made the explanation stronger; the options listed appear to be what is currently available to all students. Parents will also be allowed to request accelerated pathways for their child, but there is not an explanation of the process/procedures for making this request and how it would be followed-up by the district or school.

The applicant provides brief information on how the needs of students with disabilities and English Language Learners will be met; however, the brief information does not provide a good context for truly understanding how these students needs will be met. Research information about what contributes to gaps in performance for students with disabilities and English learners is included, but does not seem necessary; rather a thorough explanation of how these students' needs would be met using the on-line intervention programs that were stated would have been more meaningful. Thus the applicant received a score in the middle point range.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies and briefly describes good tools that will be used ensure access to information in and out of school by a variety of stakeholders. A unique approach is the installment of mobile learning labs on buses that travel on long routes to transfer students to and from school. The other strategy planned is to provide students and teachers with personal learning devices to access online content, conduct research, access assessment information, etc. Since the applicant stated that parent permission would be required before the devices would be distributed, it would have been helpful to explain how parents would be informed of the availability of the devices; and the avenues that would be used to conduct parent outreach to ensure that all parents were aware of this resource and their responsibility. Further details on a

range of strategies for technical support are missing.

The applicant refers to the electronic Student Portfolio system as its tool for parents and students to export information which makes sense since it compiles all student information into one location. This system also has a good communication tool that allows parents and teachers to discuss student performance and recommendations. Information from this database can be exported into other data systems that are part of the district's larger data management system.

The district is equipped well with an interoperable system that includes business and student applications. It incorporates a wide-variety of necessary information about each student, staff member, and district information.

As a result of the above information, the applicant received a score in the high point range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's plan for continuous improvement is reasonable and will provide timely and regular feedback on progress toward its goals. Funds will be used to hire an outside evaluator and data collection specialist which is a good use of funding; this allows for non-biased feedback on progress. The other components of the continuous improvement process are appropriate too. The process includes: collecting and analyzing data monthly, followed by the creation of reports to articulate progress; submission of quarterly evaluation reports that articulate current needs and modifications if necessary; and the inclusion of academic, environment, instructional and professional development data. The evaluation committee that represents all stakeholders will make recommendations and modifications to the program based on the analysis of data. Finally, a variety of good practices-electronic and hard copy-are presented for how updates and modifications will be made public. As a result, the applicant received a score in the high point range.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant provides a clear and appropriate structure for ongoing communication and engagement with all stakeholders. It will start at the top with the Project director; then a triad team of experts in different fields (curriculum, data, family engagement, instruction, and turn-around experts) who will then share info and get feedback from principals; then the principals communicate with staff; and the staff communicates with students and parents. Professional Learning Communities will also be implemented to discuss progress and share feedback monthly to the project director. Communication between all of the above stakeholders is expected to occur at a minimum of monthly which is very timely. As a result, the applicant received points in the high point range.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant proposed achievable performance measures; however, there were only nine measures included and the grade appropriate health or social emotional learning indicator was missing from grades 4-8. Also, information on the methodology for selecting the measures was missing in some cases. Without these details, it is challenging to know if they are ambitious. As a result, the applicant received a score in the middle point range.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant includes a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the funded activities; however, due to the brevity of information provided, it is not a high quality plan. Evaluation documents will be created to collect data, but it does not state specifically the data that will be collected and how the information will be used. Also, the data collection specialist has most of the responsibility for collecting and analyzing information; there is no inclusion for how other district leaders will be involved in evaluating the effectiveness. A broad summary is provided that provides little evidence for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development and technology that are used to build teacher capacity and to create</p>		

personalized learning. As a result, this section received a score in the low point range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does include a budget that identifies the funds that will be needed to support the project. Most of the budgeted items seems reasonable to support the implementation of the proposal; however, the rationale for the investments is weak because there is very little information provided. It is unclear as to why the Project Director position is .5 FTE; Grant Manager position as .75 FTE; and Data Analysis Specialists as .25 FTE (all close to or less than part-time positions), when these positions are integral to the implementation and monitoring of the grant; based on information presented throughout the grant, it appears that these positions would need to be full-time. Other positions listed are also part-time or less without an in-depth explanation as to why the applicant made this decision. One time costs are identified within the budget table. As a result of the above, the applicant received a score in the mid-point range.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides information on how it plans to sustain the goals of the plan, but it is not well developed. The plan briefly explains how it would use State and local funds to support maintaining certain portions of the plan which are reasonable; however, information on how it will evaluate the effectiveness of investments to plan for the future is lacking. It speaks to one-time costs for equipment purchases, but not how to maintain on-going technical support that will be needed after the term of the grant. As a result, this section received points in the middle score range.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a very brief description of its partnership with an agency who will provide support to address social and emotional family issues. They identify and briefly explain two positions that will provide support to each district, but how they will carry out their work and identify needs of the district to target their support is missing. Population-level desired results are identified for PK-3, grades 6-8, grades 9-12, and all students, but they are only focused on reducing challenging misbehavior and family engagement; the desired results are summarized into statements that don't clearly articulate specific results over time. There is also no baseline data for any of the measures; it is stated that this information will be collected in year one; thus, there lacks an understanding of why the measures were selected and how they align to the focus of the Competitive Preference Priority.</p> <p>The descriptions for tracking the indicators, using data to target resources, and strategy for scaling the project beyond the participating students are not well developed. Very little information is provided to determine whether or not the partnership will make a difference to improve results over time. The description for how services would be integrated is also weak; more information on what this would look like is needed. A brief description is provided for how staff capacity would be built to assess needs, identify and inventory needs of the community; create a decision making process; engage families, and assess progress; but again, more specific information on the process and procedures for building staff capacity is needed- this part of the plan is not well developed. Finally, ambitious and achievable performance measures with a thorough description of desired results is lacking. As a result of the above, the applicant received a score in the middle point range.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score

Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: In evaluating the entire application, the applicant made good attempts at trying to articulate its vision, processes, and procedures for creating a personalized learning environment. Overall, it is apparent that the applicant is trying to build on its current work and utilize different strategies and procedures for addressing the needs of its lowest performing students. The applicant provides information at the basic level that demonstrates a commitment to personalized learning environments to help students meet college and career standards. Including some of the information that was lacking would make the application more comprehensive.		
Total	210	144



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0148TX-3 for Region 5 Education Service Center

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Personal Learning Environments for Generation X (PLEX) aims to serve four isolated, rural districts in the Region 5 Education Service Center (ESC 5), which serves 6 counties and 36 public school districts in Texas. The six small, geographically separate districts (Burkeville ISD with 299 students, High Island ISD with 180 students, Newton ISD with 1,125 students, and West Hardin ISD with 599 students), are plagued with intergenerational poverty, low levels of educational attainment, and high unemployment. These districts have significantly lower performances in both reading and math across all grade levels on the TAKS examinations. Alarming gaps in achievement exist among student groups at all grade levels. Dwindling budgets pose a great challenge for the involved high-needs rural students in narrowing the existing gaps.

Evidence of gaps is provided for TAKS examination results across all grade levels in both reading and math, as well as in advanced course completion, and the Texas Success Initiative exams for both ELA and math. Access to professional development for teachers is limited due to both the remoteness of the districts and the lack of technology infrastructure to support online and distance learning opportunities. A lack of technology further limits student access to technology resources to support student learning. The schools further lack evaluation tools, assessment programs, and professional support to provide specialized classes, advanced coursework, and transferrable college-credit bearing courses. To highlight the technology limitations, a chart is provided to show the state of computer access within the districts. In West Hardin CSD, the ratio of computers to students is 1:10. Similarly, Burkeville ISD has no computers 5 years old or newer in its computer lab.

The PLEX vision is clearly built upon the four core educational assurance areas. As of 2012, all Texas schools are implementing STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) with the goal of increasing post-secondary readiness of graduates, ensuring national and international competitiveness. Response to Intervention is being implemented, and 3-D Triage Teams are being formed to pull together existing leadership teams to work together to improve student outcomes through data analysis and professional development and implement evidence-based strategies (including a School Turnaround Model).

PLEX is committed to building upon existing data systems that measure student growth and success, informing teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction. The districts already have robust data systems to measure student progress. Burkeville and Newton ISD use a system that not only manages data, but also provides curriculum mapping,

parent communication, RTI monitoring, a school improvement plan, student portfolios, Personal Graduation Plans, and a tracking system for meeting graduation requirements. West Hardin and High Island use a different product that includes data management, curriculum management and lesson planning, and teacher appraisal management. Through PLEX, the use of both of the systems will be expanded to support data-driven instruction. Training will be ongoing to support the development of personal learning environments (PLEs).

PLEX is somewhat lacking in its efforts to recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals. The four districts plan to use funds they currently receive from Title II, Part-A, Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund to provide hiring and retention strategies, but specifics are not provided. A focus on training and support for teachers may help with retention and recruitment as well as morale, but specific, targeted efforts to attract and keep highly effective teachers are needed.

The proposal set forth in PLEX is clearly about turning around our lowest-achieving schools. The districts chosen for participation are clearly very needy both in terms of resources and academic achievement. While not explicitly stated, the current capacity of leadership is likely not sufficient to produce substantive change as each district has a superintendent with less than three years' experience. To remedy these problems, PLEX will bring in turnaround experts to conduct needs assessments to guide the 3-D Triage Teams. Certified trainers and implementation specialists will use a Training of Trainers (TOT) model to assist ESC 5 Consultants in becoming certified trainers in online academic intervention programs. Needs-based professional development will be provided to teachers and targeted intervention programs, supports, services, tools, and technology will be implemented to align with individual needs, inform instructional decisions, and support PLEs.

The net result of the PLEX plan will be to accelerate student achievement, deepen student understanding, and increase equity through personalized support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests.

While the vision of the PLEX plan has credible goals, and has clearly built its work upon the four core assurance areas, the vision lacks details regarding both recruiting and retaining teachers, and describing the classroom experience for participating students and teachers. As a result, section (A)(1) scores at the lower end of the high range.

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

10

9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The PLEX initiative selected the four lowest performing school districts within ESC 5 for participation. The four districts average 62% free and reduced lunch participation, with one elementary school having a 75% free and reduced lunch population. The schools also classify by U.S. Census definitions as both rural distant and rural remote. Of the 12 individual schools participating, only three of them were not identified by the Texas Education Agency as Academically Unacceptable in the Preliminary 2013 Accountability Ratings. The applicant breaks down participation by school with total numbers of students at each location, numbers of students in poverty, high-need participants, and educator participants.

The applicant has developed a strategy for improvement that will likely build sustainability in the involved districts. While professionals, including turnaround experts, certified trainers, and implementation specialists are being brought in to provide training and support to schools, plans to apply the TOT model and use 3-D Triage Teams will extend the reach of the benefits provided both into schools over time and into the future through sustainability. A thorough needs assessment will help identify strengths, weaknesses, and needs for students, teachers, administrators, and parents. Detailed assessments will also be used to determine specific components of PLEs at each school. 3-D Triage Team members will receive three days of in-depth training which will be followed by workshops and coaching days. From the resulting efforts and thorough analysis of performance data, each school will craft a School Improvement Plan. Specific needs to be addressed include professional development opportunities, updated technologies, training to support use of existing resources (data management systems and evidence based programs), and overcoming isolation through the use of technology to "bridge the geographic divide." Professional Learning Communities will be developed at the following levels; school, district, and online.

The applicant has a plan to address the needs of each school specifically, by first taking the time to clearly identify those needs. Some needs that generally relate to poverty, low budgets, and the isolation that comes from rurality are clearly evident, for which plans are identified. As a result of a reasonable well thought out approach to implementation, the applicant scores at the middle of the high range for (A)(2).

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

10

7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes most components of a high-quality plan in the PLEX proposal. Specific activities and/or actions with timeframes and expected outcomes are provided. Responsible parties for related actions are not clearly identified for all

listed components and while timeframes and durations are provided, little information is directly linked to activities beyond year 1. Some of the activities, such as evaluations, are likely recurring, but this is not clear based upon the information provided.

The general categories of new or enhanced activities as a result of PLEX include;

- Professional Development (TOT, ESC 5 expert-based and outside provider based)
- Evidence-Based Practices and Programs (Positive Behavior Support, RTI, CSCAPE curriculum management)
- New Learning Opportunities Through Technology (mobile learning labs on buses, personal technology devices, online and extended learning, assistive technology, distance learning, social networking)
- Teacher and Administrator Professional Development and Appraisal Systems (PDAS)

The applicant has proposed strategies that will support long-term sustainability of grant goals, with potential to provide long-term, lasting change for the impacted schools. The involvement of the ESC 5 staff will likely lead to carry-over of particularly effective elements of the plan to other districts in the 6 county region, but a specific plan to support reform beyond the existing schools is not provided.

While the applicant's plan has components of a highly-effective plan, key elements are lacking. These elements are plans for change beyond participating schools and detailed identification of responsible parties in the implementation timeline. As a result, the application scores in the lower end of the high range for (A)(3).

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant has ambitious goals for closing achievement gaps, the basis for the goals is unclear. While modest increases may not require detailed explanations, anticipated gains of 27% and 38% from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014 school year in 3-5 math achievement at Burkeville Elementary should be explained. Several other anticipated gains in excess of 10% are stated for the same time period for other grade levels and exams. Beyond that period, expected growth is much more reasonable, with growth projections of 2%-3%, which seem attainable with the implementation of new and/or improved strategies to support and guide student learning outcomes.

Graduation rates for the impacted high schools are generally fairly high, with the lowest graduation baseline data evident for the economically disadvantaged students of Newton High School (72%). Growth projections for this group are very modest (1% per year), whereas the growth for all High Island students is projected to be significantly greater (5% per year for the first 3 years). These projection differences should be explained.

College enrollments for the districts for the 2012-2013 year are low, ranging from 11% to 63%. This data is not disaggregated. Growth projections are in the neighborhood of 5% per year, which may be reasonable with implementation of targeted strategies and support. Texas does not require that students be followed after graduation, so postsecondary degree attainment data is not provided for targeted schools. The applicant does provide a table of degree attainment information and related projections for the region, with anticipated annual growth of 5% per year.

While some of the established goals require further explanation, the applicant has shared essential data relating to performance on summative assessments, achievement gaps, graduation rates, college enrollment, and degree attainment. Furthermore, the application would benefit from further disaggregation of data to more deeply analyze gaps in student achievement. As a result, the applicant scores in the upper middle range for section (A)(4).

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The region in which the PLEX schools is located provides the schools with significant barriers to student achievement. Isolation and lack of access to training and technology have kept the involved schools from achieving gains that would be possible with better resources. TEA rated Burkeville High School, West Hardin, and all Newton schools as "Academically Unacceptable" in 2008 and 2009. While Academy of Beaumont received unacceptable ratings both years, from 2008 to 2009, the school showed dramatic gains in students meeting state standards. Math and Science were particularly impressive as 25% gains were noted in both areas. These gains might be attributed to the Beginning Teacher Induction (BTI) program and the Mentoring for Science and Math Teaching program. The BTI program resulted in retention of 94%

of the involved teachers. Cognitive Tutor was used and an 85% improved performance on complex math problem solving was noted. TI-Technology was implemented, resulting in a 14% gain in math achievement by low-achieving students. Two of the involved districts are involved in a two year competitive literacy grant, in which results thus far are well exceeding projected objectives in reading and language arts proficiency at grades 3 and 10.

Three of the four districts use Study Island, and all are involved in the TEA SUCCESS program. The TEA SUCCESS program provides access to interactive math and reading programs for students in grades 3-8. The programs involved are Think Through Math, which includes bilingual tutors to assist students, and Istation, an online interactive reading program in a game-like format. These programs are tailored to the abilities of each student. Students, teachers, and parents have 24/7 access to these resources and will be equipped with tools to build confidence and support success. Technology-enabled features allow parents to track progress weekly. These resources provide helpful data to track student progress regarding content area standard mastery and inform both instruction and goal setting with data that is directly linked to content area standards.

The PLEX initiative has demonstrated a track record of success within the challenges of an isolated, rural, economically disadvantaged setting. While addressing the economically disadvantaged gap that exists is critical, further exploration of gaps that exist through more complete disaggregation of data would strengthen the application. Overall, the districts have made great strides in improving student outcomes, but areas of significant "slippage" are of concern. It is clear that some of the initiatives applied have been working. The Beginning Teacher Induction program and the Mentoring for Math and Science Education programs at Academy of Beaumont show great promise for continued increases in student achievement. The TEA SUCCESS program and the efforts resulting from the competitive literacy grant which was awarded to two of the four schools also holds promise for further gains in student achievement. An area of significant concern is that the access to student performance data by students, parents, and teachers does not seem sufficient and requires further explanation. As a result of the applicant's strengths and limitations, (B)(1) scores at the high end of the middle range.

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

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Each year, TEA releases the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report, which includes student academic progress, school-wide improvements, student demographics, staff demographics, and actual operating expenditure information. AEIS report provides budget information both online and in hard copy format at each school as follows:

- Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff (including instructional staff only, and teachers only)
- Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level
- Budget totals, school numbers and percentages, district percentages, and state percentages, divided among specific programs:
 - Bilingual / ESL Education
 - Career & Technical Education
 - Accelerated Education
 - Gifted & Talented Education
 - Regular Education
 - Special Education
 - Athletics / Related Activities
 - High School Allotment
 - Other

Given the high level of transparency in practices as established by the TEA, the applicant scores high in (B)(2).

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

10

7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has plans to create personalized learning environments through improved instructional practices and increased access to electronic resources, including online tools to support and inform instruction. ESC 5, as mandated by TEA and the Texas State Legislature, already provides support to the involved districts and will provide additional guidance and support throughout the grant implementation process. The process for turning around these low performing schools includes data analysis, needs assessments, and campus improvement plans. ESC 5 already has an established role in providing much needed technology services, including network operation and school management software to districts. Teachers in the districts have already begun implementing a blended learning model. Further improvements in infrastructure and support will increase these frameworks and others that move learning beyond the classroom walls.

ESC 5 formed a partnership during the 2011-2012 school year with the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS) through the TEA. This collaboration provides resources to provide school leaders with training on school improvement. With grant funding, these efforts will be expanded.

ESC 5 plans to assist each high school with the development of partnerships and resources to provide students with transferable college courses and entry-level work certifications. Efforts have also been underway to assist districts in specifying what students must know and be able to do to succeed in entry level courses at post-secondary institutions as required by TEA.

Both teacher and principal evaluations use the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), the state's approved evaluation instrument. For teachers, 51 criteria are evaluated within eight domains reflecting the Proficiencies of Learner-Centered Instruction. PDAS also includes Instructional Leadership Development and Administrator Appraisal to identify areas in need of development.

The involvement of ESC 5, as required by the state, will ensure that the project is implemented on schedule and on budget, with effective progress toward stated goals toward targeted populations that will extend beyond the funding period. The State has further provided a structured means of teacher and principal evaluation. The applicant does not address seat time or progression based upon mastery, so evidence is not provided to indicate that the State of Texas would support personalized learning to the extent of allowing for more flexibility in student progression. While the state has provided conditions to support successful implementation of PLEs, it is not clear that sufficient autonomy exists under legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to create truly personalized learning environments that are highly focused on the needs of individual students. As a result, the applicant scores in the middle range for (B)(3).

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

15

12

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The PLEX initiative has demonstrated evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement and support. PLEX Planning efforts included members of all groups. Project design teams included District representatives (administrators and teachers), volunteer parents, volunteer students, and business leaders. These design teams met over the course of two months to highlight needs in their communities, and brainstorm services to address existing gaps and weaknesses. Further description of the processes used by the teams and leadership would have strengthened the application.

Evidence of teacher support is documented with 100% of teachers providing signatures from Burkeville ISD, High Island ISD, and West Hardin CCISD. Newton High School only had 65% of teachers showing support via signatures, but the Newton Elementary School showed greater support with 98% of teachers providing signatures.

Letters of support and feedback are provided from a variety of entities, including the Newton County Judge, Manager of Key Energy Services, Newton Mayor, County Constable, several area churches, the Burkeville Student Council Advisor, Burkeville Water Supply, Burkeville ISD Mentor Program, a store manager, the Burkeville-Toledo Lions Club, parents, Newton County News, Newton County Public Library, Community Bank, Newton Chamber of Commerce, Campus Intervention Team Leader, Newton County Historical Commission, City of Newton, Texas A & M Extension, Purple Zone Creations, Orange Bank, Basil Oilfield Service, Hometown Florist, a variety of school representatives, West Hardin Board President, and the West Hardin PTO President. A broad basis of support for the success of the PLEX initiative is illustrated through the content and number of letters included with the application.

While the evidence provided for stakeholder engagement and support is generally strong, the applicant does not provide sufficient evidence of direct engagement and support of stakeholders. Evidence of a means of gathering ongoing feedback is also not evident. As a result, the applicant receives a score in the lower end of the high range for (B)(4).

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant puts forth a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready that includes activities, a timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties for the implementation of the PLEX plan. The plan could be improved by including more timeline information for the implementation of the grant beyond year one. The plan's approach involves

implementation of instructional strategies for all participating students that will enable a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. Student learning will be accelerated through support of individual learning needs as identified through PLP and PLC implementation.

The implementation of PLPs will engage all learners, including economically disadvantaged learners, in ways that will assist them in identifying strengths, needs, and interests that will be paired with performance data to establish long and short-term goals. Through the achievement of these goals, students will recognize the value of classroom learning and effort in achieving success. The PLP process will be ongoing, with formal meetings to evaluate progress and goal setting occurring twice per year. Parents will be involved in this process and will be encouraged to support students in goal setting and attainment. PLPs will be accessible by students, parents, and teachers anytime. PLPs will further be supported by an online portfolio system available to all Texas students.

All targeted districts will be implementing STAAR, which provides learning standards and assessments focused on increasing postsecondary readiness and competitiveness of Texas students. Through the Texas standards, assessments and performance standards have increased rigor. Post-secondary readiness standards are being established and implemented for Algebra II and English III, and empirical validation will be applied to ensure standards are linked to evidence of postsecondary readiness. A variety of learning tools and resources will be implemented, which will be chosen according to their record of success in increasing student achievement and applicability to the Texas learning standards. These resources will provide real time evidence of student progress. New devices in the area of technology will support use of these resources and will provide opportunities for students to pursue learning based on independent interest. Students will engage in video conferencing opportunities that help students gain exposure to academic content as well as diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. Middle school students will have opportunities to advance in coursework, opening opportunities for advanced opportunities at the high school level, including college credit bearing coursework and entry-level certification programs for a variety of careers. These opportunities will assist students with mastering critical academic content while developing essential skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

All students will participate in formal training for the use of new technology adopted in the schools, including brief interactive tutorials on the learning applications being used. Training will support the implementation of a variety of instructional approaches and environments to meet the needs of all students, including high needs students. These approaches include small group instruction, student-led investigations, large group instruction, and technology facilitated instruction.

Professional development and PLC efforts will prepare educators to make assessment and monitoring a key component of instruction, which will in turn inform practices. Data will be used to recommend students for advanced coursework, interventions, enrichments, and extra online learning opportunities to deepen understand and promote student interest and engagement. PLPs will be updated monthly and made available to students and parents. Meetings with students and parents regarding PLPs will occur twice annually.

While the applicant has set forth a high quality plan for the personalization of learning environments, the application would benefit from further explanation of efforts at the elementary and middle levels as well as the means employed to support high needs students. As a result, the applicant scores in the lower high range for (C)(1).

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant puts forth a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment, providing all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. Professional development is established as the key component of the initiative because through it, schools will engage in intensive teacher and administrator professional development for successful school turnaround efforts. A turnaround team will work with literacy, STEM, and curricular specialists within ESC 5 to deliver turn-key professional development to educators in the isolated region impacted by this proposal. Turn around experts will work with ESC 5 staff to build a sustainable foundation for ongoing improvement. Professional development will reach over 259 educators and administrators with a focus on PLPs and PLEs for all students. Professional development will be provided to ensure the effective implementation of new technologies. This will be accomplished through PLCs, including the Project Share PLC, which is a Texas-supported network of professional peers exploring evidence based best practices in instruction and assessment. Targeted instructors will participate in at least 246 hours of training, professional development and coaching activities annually. It is clear that the applicant has embraced a value for professional development in reforming school practices.

Through PLCs, targeted educators will practice, implement, and share new, technology-enriched lesson plans directly aligned to Texas learning standards and designed to significantly deepen student understanding of key concepts, content, and skills. Successful lesson plans will be uploaded to a searchable online repository for use by teachers throughout the

region. Best-practices in differentiated instruction, providing key strategies and methodologies for integrating small group instruction, student-led learning investigations, large group instruction, one-on-one instruction, and technology facilitated instruction will be the focus of PLC meetings. Teachers' lessons will feature hands-on learning activities that deepen understanding of key concepts, utilize personal learning devices to investigate enrichment material, and create learning projects that require higher-order thinking skills. As a result of PLC support, teachers will become proficient in adapting instruction to meet individual learning needs and styles. Teachers will engage students in group instruction daily, but time each week will be devoted to the unique academic needs of each student through differentiated instruction practices. It is evident that the applicant plans to personalize learning through a variety of instructional approaches geared at meeting student needs. The strategies suggested with related professional development will equip teachers with essential tools and skills to engage students in personalized learning.

Data tracking training will be extensive and embedded in coaching practices, ensuring that educators can quickly and easily access real time data to monitor student progress, inform instruction, and inform the PLP development and adjustment processes. Individual Action Plans will be developed for individual students. Teachers and administrators will work together to establish procedures for struggling students, including mandatory intervention processes for students failing to meet benchmarks. All districts currently use robust data management systems to track student, class, and teacher data and trends through a variety of tools and applications. Embedded coaching supports will focus on educator needs in benchmarking student progress, analyzing and reporting assessment data, curriculum mapping, assessment generation, tracking graduation credits, and a school improvement planning.

The implementation of PLPs will engage all learners, including economically disadvantaged learners, in ways that will assist them in identifying strengths, needs, and interests that will be paired with performance data to establish long and short-term goals. Through the achievement of these goals, students will recognize the value of classroom learning and effort in achieving success. The PLP process will be ongoing, with formal meetings to evaluate progress and goal setting occurring twice per year. Parents will be involved in this process and will be encouraged to support student goal setting and attainment. PLPs will be accessible by students, parents, and teachers anytime. PLPs will further be supported by an online portfolio system available to all Texas students.

All targeted districts will be implementing STAAR, which provides learning standards and assessments focused on increasing postsecondary readiness and competitiveness of Texas students. Through the Texas standards, assessments and performance standards have increased rigor, post-secondary readiness standards are being established and implemented for Algebra II and English III, and empirical validation will be applied to ensure standards are linked to evidence of postsecondary readiness. A variety of learning tools and resources will be implemented, which will be chosen according to their record of success in increasing student achievement and applicability to the Texas learning standards. These resources will provide real time evidence of student progress. New devices in the area of technology will support use of these resources and will provide opportunities for students to pursue learning based on independent interest. Students will engage in video conferencing opportunities that help students gain exposure to academic content as well as diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. Middle school students will have opportunities to advance in coursework, opening opportunities for advanced opportunities at the high school level, including college credit bearing coursework and entry-level certification programs for a variety of careers. These opportunities will assist students with mastering critical academic content while developing essential skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

All students will participate in formal training for the use of new technology adopted in the schools, including brief interactive tutorials on the learning applications being used. Training will support the implementation of a variety of instructional approaches and environments to meet the needs of all students, including high needs students. These approaches include small group instruction, student-led investigations, large group instruction, and technology facilitated instruction.

Professional development and PLC efforts will prepare educators to make assessment and monitoring a key component of instruction, which will in turn inform practices. Data will be used to recommend students for advanced coursework, interventions, enrichments, and extra online learning opportunities to deepen understanding and promote student interest and engagement. PLPs will be updated monthly and made available to students and parents. Meetings with students and parents regarding PLPs will occur twice annually.

High quality learning will be supported by new technologies and web-based products, included in the Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum (DMAC) program. These resources include CIA Alignment, a curriculum mapping tool; Personal Graduation Plan (PGP); State Assessment, to disaggregate TAKS, TAKS-M, TAKS-Alt, TAKS Accommodated, TELPAS data; STAAR, all forms of STAAR and EOC; Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI); TEJAS LEE; TEKScore, an online scanning and scoring tool; TEKS Assessment Generator (TAG), an assessment generator; Class Notes, an online parent communication tool; Student Success Initiative (SSI), an organization tool which provides structure and speed for the SSI management process; Credit Acquisition Plan (CAP), a tracking tool for graduation credits; Response to Intervention, a management and monitoring system for RTI; and a School Improvement Plan (SIP). Student portfolios will

bring all student information together in one digital location. The State Data Tool provides a summary comparison of reports in all core areas and grade levels for subscribers in Texas. Additional digital resources to be used anytime anywhere include Study Island, Think Through Math, Istation, CIA Alignment (a curriculum mapping tool), and a selection of evidence-based math and literacy student support programs aligned to the Common Core. 3-D Triage Teams will work with administrators and teachers to match student needs with products, continuously striving to provide feedback on the effectiveness of resources in meeting student needs.

A timeline and deliverables with responsible parties is provided to further develop the plan. While the plan is geared at increasing teacher and administrator effectiveness, which will in time increase the number of students receiving instruction from effective and highly effective teachers, no specific plan is developed in the proposal geared at maximizing the contact of current highly effective teachers and principals. Some practices described in the application lack development. The embedding of coaching practices and use of PLCs to support teaching should be further developed. As a result, the plan scores at the lower end of the high range for (C)(2).

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	10

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A high-quality plan is provided by the applicant to support project implementation. The ESC 5 will serve as LEA central office, providing support to Burkeville, High Island, Newton, and West Hardin schools. This role is well-suited for ESC 5 given its prior and ongoing experience in providing services, including services relating to implementation of new technologies and assessments, to regional districts. A full-time Project Director to oversee all project-related activities, and facilitate communication with the administrative structures at each participating district will be dedicated to serve grant implementation. The 3-D Triage Team will be composed of five members of the ESC 5 Data Analysis & Leadership Effectiveness Team, the six members of the Improving Academic Performance Team, and the two members of the Family & Community Engagement Team. This team will work directly with the target schools, using needs assessments to develop action plans. A technology coordinator will work with each district to upgrade infrastructure, provide technology training, and maintain the project's website. A grant manager will be provided to facilitate, manage and monitor the project's partnerships and assist the Project Director ensuring proper use of the funds in accordance with the approved grant objectives.

School principals will work with the 3-D Triage Team to promote student achievement through flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets. The team will serve as a resource to administrators, acting as a think tank to support creative solutions to problems. ESC 5 in partnership with the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS) through the Texas Education Agency will provide technical assistance to districts and schools. ESC 5 has established sufficient autonomy under Texas legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement PLEs as described in the proposal.

District leadership, including principals and superintendents, was involved in the decision making and development process to ensure effective, long-term systemic change. School board and site-based decision making teams were involved in the establishment of needs, objectives, and goals. Texas has required site-based decision making since 1992, as a collaborative effort by which principals, teachers, campus staff, district staff, parents, and community representatives assess educational outcomes of all students.

Student progress monitoring will be ongoing through technology, making student mastery more easily identified. Students will be allowed to test out of coursework to pursue advanced study, but the applicant does not address the issue of seat time requirements and the nature of the advanced study is not specified. Homework, projects, vocabulary, quizzes, student portfolios, and hands-on skill demonstrations will be added to traditional standardized testing procedures to provide students multiple avenues for demonstrating mastery.

Through Project Share, teachers will share lesson plans and other resources that will benefit all students, including resources to support students with disabilities, English learners, and traditional students. Students will have access to individualized instruction in core content areas, with immediate feedback, which is accessible anytime, anywhere. Evidence-based extended learning software tools (Language!, Vmath, and LETRS) will be used to customize the learning process for all students including those with special learning needs, such as students with disabilities and English language learners.

While the applicant has overall established a high-quality plan for LEA practices policies and rules, further development of aspects of the application would be beneficial. Accelerated pacing of study may simply involve enhanced opportunities within a particular course, not truly promoting mastery over seat time. It is not evident based on provided information that seat time may be waived to support truly personalized learning, where even the learning pace might be personalized to the extent of allowing students to complete courses on schedules that meet individual needs. The discussion of flexibility and autonomy of individual districts and schools is limited and no discussion of autonomy in budget decisions at the school and district levels is provided. As a result, the applicant scores at the top of the middle range for (D)(1).

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

The PLEX initiative activities will be accessible to all students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders. Anytime, anywhere content will make content, tools and resources available beyond the school day on personalized learning devices with parent permission. This will promote equitable access to resources for both parents and students. Mobile learning labs will be installed on buses to support students on the longest bus routes. Extensive training, coaching, and online support will be provided to all stakeholders to support the use of resources and implementation of grant initiatives. Teachers will train students and additional sessions, including evening sessions, will be led by teachers or administrators.

The technology tools being provided include an online student portfolio, which brings together a wealth of student data. This is accessible through a secure login and is accessible by both parents and students. This access to data facilitates communication about student progress. This data is also exportable in an open data format to be utilized by other electronic learning systems, such as DMAC and Texas SUCCESS.

ESC 5 offers its schools TxEIS, which is a web-based product that supports operational and reporting requirements of Texas schools. Many applications are included with the system, including business and student applications to support virtually all reporting and data needs of schools.

The applicant has developed a high quality plan that includes a timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties for actionable items to support PLEX implementation. The PLEX initiative provides substantial evidence to support its capacity to personalize learning through supportive infrastructure. As a result, the applicant scores high for (D)(2).

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

ESC 5 plans to implement a rigorous continuous improvement process that will provide timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals, with embedded opportunities for continuous improvement beyond the term of the grant. An external evaluator will assist, working with the Project Director in monitoring, measuring and publicly sharing information regarding quality of investments. Data will be collected monthly for submission to the external evaluator. Quarterly reports will be submitted by the evaluator to the 3-D Triage Team, who will then use results to drive program modification and improvement. Data collected will include academic indicators, environmental indicators, instructional effectiveness indicators, and professional development indicators. Volunteer parents and students will serve on the evaluation committee alongside teachers, principals, and 3-D Triage Team members, led by the Project Director, in quarterly meetings to analyze project impact and progress. Minutes from these meetings will be made available to the public through a variety of measures.

While the narrative describes aspects of high-quality plan components, with plans to make evaluation information public, a formal timeline with deliverables and responsible parties is not developed in relation to the continuous improvement process. A general timeline for grant implementation is provided, but this component of the application does not address the components of the continuous improvement plan described. As a result, the application scores in the upper middle range for (E)(1).

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A variety of strategies are implemented in PLEX to ensure ongoing communication and engagement. The Project Director will be in daily communication with the 3-D Triage Team, who will in turn be in contact with each campus principal on a

daily basis. Each principal will communicate directly with faculty and staff. PLCs will communicate with 3-D Triage Team experts. Principals will communicate with the Project Director bimonthly, solidifying training sessions and professional development. Educators will communicate with students on a daily basis. The data collection specialist and external evaluator will work with the Project Director conducting outreach to the 3-D Triage Team, principals, and teachers. Communication of contracted positions with the project director will occur at least monthly. Ongoing efforts will ensure that the community of stakeholders is updated on PLEX progress. Mailings, summaries in district communications, and communications postings on a website will be employed to maintain constant contact with stakeholders. Hard copies of evaluation and project modification documents will be available through the local district administrative offices.

While the narrative describes aspects of high-quality plan components, including plans to make evaluation information public, a formal timeline with deliverables and responsible parties is not developed in relation to ongoing communication and engagement. A general timeline for grant implementation is provided, but this component of the application does not address the components of the communication described. As a result, the applicant scores in the middle range for (E)(2).

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

5

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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Performance measures provided include rationale; rigorous, timely, and formative information regarding successes and concerns; and means for improvement and review over time. The measures also include what are the most part reasonable targets for improvement over time. The performance measures to be evaluated include;

- The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup whose teacher of record and principal are highly effective by district
- The percentage of students, district-wide, meeting state standards in both reading and math based on school report card data
- Percentage of students grades PreK-3 meeting TAKS reading standards (This data is disaggregated to include African American students as well as economically disadvantaged.)
- Percentage of students in grades PreK-3 with decreased challenging behaviors and increased pro-social skills (by school)
- The number and percentage of students on track to college-and career- readiness in grades 4-8 based on math, writing, and science assessment data (by school)
- The number and percentage of students who complete and submit the FAFSA (by school)
- The number and percentage of students on track to college and career readiness based on Grade 11 English results (This data is disaggregated to include both economically disadvantaged and African American students.)
- The number and percentage of students on track to college and career readiness based on Grades 9-12 TAKS reading, math, writing, and science data (This data is disaggregated to include both economically disadvantaged and African American students.)
- Percentage of college and career ready graduates in grades 9-12 based on TAKS scores (This data is disaggregated to include both economically disadvantaged and African American students.)
- Percentage of students in grades 9-12 with decreased challenging behaviors and increased pro-social skills as evidenced by referrals (by school)

The applicant has provided a variety of appropriate measures to evaluate progress. While many established goals are reasonable, others are questionable. For example, a gain of 20% is a target for growth in the percentage of college ready graduates that are African American from SY 2013-13 to SY 2014-2015. Anticipated growth rates of around 10% per year in the first couple of years for all participating students seem similarly unreasonable. The applicant also has not provided all elements of a high quality plan as a timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties are not included to support the implementation of performance measures. As a result, the application scores in the middle range for (E)(3).

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

ESC 5 plans to implement a rigorous continuous improvement process that will provide timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals. An external evaluator will assist, working with the Project Director in monitoring, measuring and publicly sharing information regarding quality of investments. Data will be collected monthly for submission to the external evaluator. Quarterly reports will be submitted by the evaluator to the 3-D Triage Team, who will then use results to drive program modification and improvement. Data collected will include academic indicators, environmental indicators, instructional effectiveness indicators, and professional development indicators. Volunteer parents and students will serve on the evaluation committee alongside teachers, principals, and 3-D Triage Team members, which will be led by the Project Director, engaging in quarterly meetings to analyze project impact and progress.

While the applicant has communicated means to evaluate the effectiveness of its activities through data analysis and collaborative review and planning efforts, a high-quality plan that includes specific actions, a timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties would benefit from further development in the proposal. As a result, the applicant scores in the middle range for (E)(4).

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>ESC 5 has provided a listing of other funds being used to support the project which come from local, state, and federal funding. These funds listed with the activities they support include such funding as Early Childhood, Title I, and Title II funds. Budget categories, total amounts, and explanations of the use of funds to support project implementation are provided. Descriptions and amounts seem reasonable for the scope of the project. The descriptions identify items that are one-time costs.</p> <p>While the applicant's budget and rationale seem reasonable, the proposed budget does not clearly identify strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments being established as a result of grant implementation. As a result, the applicant scores in the upper middle range for (F)(1).</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Long-term sustainability of project activities will be supported by on-time equipment purchases and ongoing professional development. Ongoing professional development will increase the capacity of staff to create highly effective personalized learning environments in the long term. Title I, Part A supplemental funds will help support improvement in basic programming and hence will continue to support PLE efforts after the grant period. Further elements proposed to support sustainability include the use of the train the trainer model to extend the capacity of ESC 5 in continuing its efforts with the impacted schools beyond the grant period, partnerships with colleges in providing dual enrollment courses and technical certifications, and partnerships with mental health agencies. Projections for related needs and associated costs into the future are also provided.</p> <p>While the applicant has several elements of a high-quality plan in its proposal, the plan lacks the essential activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties required of a high-quality plan. The application would be strengthened by a more detailed, thorough development of sustainability plans. As a result, the applicant scores in the middle range for (F)(2).</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proposes a plan to integrate mental health services in a partnership designed to bring 1.5 days per week per district of support provided by 1 Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and 1 Social Worker. The LPCs will work with school counselors to provide individual and group counseling for identified students and classroom presentations for all students. Social workers will reach out to targeted hard-to-reach families, facilitating home-to-school communication, helping set student academic and behavioral goals, and connecting the student and family to available resources and wraparound services in the community. These efforts will be focused on meeting basic needs of students, and strengthening the web of support structures in place to promote full attainment of academic potential. Partnering mental health agencies will work with project staff in the ongoing needs assessment process. Mental health workers will provide increased opportunities for families to link to available supportive services in their communities.</p> <p>Mental health professionals will educate staff in identifying high risk behaviors and other indicators of need for mental health support. The goal of efforts will be to increase student readiness for academic success. Progress will be monitored</p>		

at least quarterly. Gathered data will be used to drive program modifications as necessary.

Population desired results are listed for PreK-3, 6-8, 9-12, and all students. Results include reductions in misbehavior and increased engagement of hard to reach parents as indicated on annual parent and teacher surveys. Targets are established for these improvements extending into the post-grant year.

ESC will work with other non-participating agencies in establishing similar partnerships to provide direct services to youth and families in its efforts to scale the model up to support additional communities.

The applicant has established a plan to provide supportive services to meet the basic needs of its students, including the economically disadvantaged. The efforts of this partnership, by helping to meet the most basic needs of students and their families, will support improvements in student readiness and capacity to learn, thereby meeting proposal goals of improved student outcomes, engagement, and achievement. While the activities are admirable, the presence of the mental health professionals in districts only 1.5 days per week seems limiting. 1.5 days per school may be more reasonable in supporting efforts to educate staff, meet with and counsel students, and engage hard to reach families. As a result of a reasonably well developed partnership to meet basic needs of students and families in its low-income region, the applicant scores high in the competitive preference priority.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has met Absolute Priority 1 through adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; building data systems that measure student growth and success, and informing teachers and principals of how they can improve instruction; providing means for recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and turning around our lowest-achieving schools. The applicant plans to strive to improve low-performing schools through personalizing the educational process. As a result, achievement gaps will be narrowed and achievement will increase. The net result will be more students graduating prepared for colleges and careers.</p>		

Total	210	156
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