



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0499IA-1 for Sioux City Community School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Sioux City Community School District has a clear foundation from which to build their case in this proposal. The argument for low income and underrepresented groups and the subsequent high school drop out rates were made clear. The impact of those issues and the affect they have on school leaders is also clearly stated. The aforementioned rationale melds nicely with the discourse regarding Sioux City School Districts ethnic and economic population. A clear reform vision that builds on the four core educational assurance areas is presented. Reform efforts are grounded in the participatory action research.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>SCCSD has a clear high quality plan to scale their implementation.(a) Every K-12 school (23) in the district is targeted. A description of the process used to select schools was not provided but a rationale stating all schools would be included to be systemic in approach was articulated. It appears that all school meets the eligibility requirements. (b) All schools are listed by name and level. (c) A complete list of student population along with a breakout by income, ethnicity, need, and the educators who will work with these students of described in detail. Approximate numbers based on previous year numbers are presented.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>There is a district wide systemic plan. SCCSD will lead the state in a Response to Intervention model with the foundation for the development of the district's RtI, which will be the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model. Teachers will hold conversations based on student achievement. Coaching will be provided for the PLC model, formative assessment development and RtI model. The theory of change is based on Marzano's work but could be expanded upon as it pertains to the reform plan in SCCSD. This would ensure that change could be expanded beyond the participating schools.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>This section is presented more as data tables showing the projected trajectories, which give a clear plan for start/stop times and deliverables across the timeline. Supporting text helps tell a story of success relative to the data in the tables. (a) An upward trajectory of proficiency scores is presented in table a4a for all content areas at all grade levels. The tables are also broken out by ELL, ethnicity, SES, and SPED. A lofty goal of 100% proficiency by 2017 for every student on summative assessments is presented. Although admirable, this goal does not seem realistic and thus points were dedecuted. (b) Presented in table a4b, a baseline and projected goals at each grade level for reading and math at each school is illustrated. (c) Of course with every student attaining 100% proficiency, every student will graduate in most cases. (d) This goal is more realistic in that they propose to meet proficiency markers closer to 80% with the graduates being well prepared for college by 2017. The discrepancy between 100% proficiency and 80% graduation needs to be clarified.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>(a) Over the last four years, SCCSD has boasted elementary math and 11th grade reading scores surpassing AYP. These accomplishments have moved the district out of delay DINA status. They state that increased and focused professional development was the key factor in the</p>		

improvements. Data presented in the appendix helps tell the story of improvement. (b) High school graduation rates have increased in the last four years and drop out rates have decreased comparably. (c) A description of the data sources and data collection systems are provided but how those data and subsequent analyses are presented to students, educators and parents is lacking. In the previous section, an open community forum was described but missing from this section was how ALL these data sources are transparent.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Transparency is apparent by the description in this proposal. All salaries are presented both on The Iowa Open Meetings Law is followed within the district. Iowa Open Meetings Law requires that there must be a public notice of meetings, minutes kept and closed session for specific exceptions. School board meetings and some advisory meetings are subject to the Iowa Open Meetings Law and thus the district follows the law closely. SCCSD publishes annually the salaries of all staff members within the district. This annual publication includes salaries for teachers, administrators, bus drivers, and all levels of instructional and support staff and can be read annually in the Sioux City Journal.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal states the goals and laws of Iowa and how the district adheres to those goals and laws. How the district will demonstrate autonomy under state law is not clear especially as it pertains to personalized learning environments. A plan to use a PLC rather than top down process toward autonomy is admirable.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5
--	-----------	----------

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The proposal preparation was a community effort. A timeline showing the level of effort and for each stakeholder was presented in chronological order. It is not clear as to whether or not SCCSD has collective bargaining representation but the proposal does state that this effort will be systemic within the district so the minimum 70% of teachers reached is moot. (b) Externally, parents, business community, city government, and the state board of education gave input to the proposal and school improvement plan. A letter of support is provided for each of these areas of stakeholder input. Missing from this section is a description of who the specific stakeholders are and how all teachers will be impacted.

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

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Each high school student in the district was provided a tablet this school year and a laptop next year to provide greater access to personalized learning environments. The 1:1 Laptop Initiative is an effort to individualize learning for students, increase student engagement and eliminate the socio-economic gap among students, specifically by providing technological tools to students with and without economic resources to purchase their own technology. Clearly, technology is vital in effectively using the individualized learning plan for all students. A plan to cascade the 1:1 initiative to middle and then to elementary grades is articulated. High quality training for teacher and administrators is targeted to continue as the 1:1 initiative unfolds.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section begins to address student college and career readiness but is lacking in several areas. (a) How students will be identified of their academic shortcomings is loosely stated but student understanding to what they are learning and why they are learning is not mentioned. Formative assessments are alluded to but there is no specific information regarding which formative assessments currently exist or how new assessments will be identified or created. There is also no indication as to how deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest will be customized. Talk about 1:1 laptops is mentioned but how the technology will be used is insufficient. Further, how mastery learning will occur is also missing. (b) Nothing is mentioned about how parents and educators support personalized sequences of instructional content or skill development. No strategy to ensure all students succeed or a high-quality instructional approach is mentioned. Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements is also not clear. The proposal addresses the need for formative assessments and states that all students will be assessed three times each year in grades K-12. However, how those results will inform instructional and learning is not apparent. (c) The ACT to measure college readiness is the only thing in place right now. No other assessment is specifically mentioned or articulated as to how to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	7
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>(a) A very detailed plan to implement PLCs and subject-specific professional learning teams is provided. Currently, Pinnacle Insight, a web-based analytics tool, is being used within the district. Data from multiple sources and years can be captured, displayed and shared. The data can be identified at the student and teacher level, as well as cohort, building and district levels. A data manager will be hired in district with more than 450 students to help manage the large data sets Pinnacle will provide. A description of the summer workshops is provided but what exactly will occur in those workshops and how (b) Although not yet determined exactly how this will occur, training for the Rtl system and capacity building for teachers in each school is articulated. Those buildings with greater than 450 students will also have an instructional coach who will focus on the varying interventions. What is lacking, however, are specific examples and descriptions of how content and instruction will be adapted to provide students with common and individualized tasks. There is also no indication as to how high-quality learning resources are aligned with college- and career-ready standards and/or graduation requirements. (c) How exactly the Rtl will improve teacher and principal practice is also not apparent. (d) SCCSD will use Reeves 90/90/90 plan but exactly how that plan will unfold in SCCSD is unclear. It would be helpful to include a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>There is mention of cabinet members but it is not clear who these people are and what their role might be. (a) An organized leadership structure of support is provided and described in detail. By flattening the central office so the focus is on individual schools is an important and critical step in providing equitable support throughout the district. (b). Clearly, the plan is for LEA oversight with individual school autonomy to meet the needs of their student population. The flattening process and the leadership initiatives in place will provide sufficient flexibility in each school. (c) It is unclear exactly how students will be given the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery. (d & e) There are several technology-based applications that provide platforms for open communication for all students. There is not, however, evidence to support opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and in multiple ways.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>SCCSD claims to have the infrastructure in place to run a successful program. (a) Some buildings in the district are over 100 years old, so the infrastructure needs within the building will need to be addressed to adequately provide and support the technological opportunities being provided in newer buildings. (b) A variety of technological solutions are in place for student's parents and educators. Of most concern are the parents of low SES students who generally don't have the technology or expertise to circumvent technological issue. (c) There are several technologies in place for parents and students to access data online. There is insufficient evidence that the solutions in place have exportable open data formats that will inform learning.(d) There is again, no evidence supporting interoperable data systems, however the Pinnacle Gradebook is expected to use interoperable data.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Research driven decisions are driving the continuous improvement process in this district. PLCs and action research models will continue to be used in SCCSD. Results from action research should provide valuable insight as to how teachers can improve instruction but there is no evidence to address how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The plan is to have an annual report and a report presented at the quarterly meetings in the district. Other engagements with external</p>		

stakeholders are presented wins to the local newspaper. That plan does not suggest transparency, as sometimes the losses are important channels of communication and avenues for improvement.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Several ambitious performance measures are described and most are already being used successfully in the district. There is a plan to measure beyond the required performance measures as well. A rationale for why these measures were chosen is missing as well as how these measures will be reviewed and improved over time. Standardized test are generally not formative in nature and the description of this test provided in the text are not sufficient formative assessments to plan a course of action for students. There is no plan to improve these measures over time.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
--	----------	----------

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The data collection and analysis plan is not rigorous. SCCSD would benefit from partnering with institutions of higher education to help ensure proper research and evaluation design procedures are in place so data can inform practice. Self-reported information is important but their needs to be greater oversight to ensure effectiveness of the project. Such techniques as observations, interview, server-side data mining, etc. could strengthen this section.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The goals implemented during RTTD funding will become the culture of SCCSD and those goals will continue after funding. (a & b) The reasonable and sufficient budget identifies RTTD funds and other funding sources that will support project activities. (c) The budget and subsequent justification seem to have been thought through and provides reasonable support for development and implementation for the size of the district proposing. A sustainability plan is in place to continue the project after the funding timeline as well.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A plan for sustainability is loosely described as it pertains to project goals. There is a plan for sustainable budget after funding runs out but there is no mention of support from local or state government beyond the scope of this project. Partnerships with local non-profits are mentioned but those partnerships do not impact budgetary concerns.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Several partnerships are in place to all students and their families to ensure postsecondary success. Population level goals are aligned with targeted performance measures in E(2). These measures are ambitious yet seemingly achievable in the scope of this project. A good description of how selected indicators would measure each result is nicely presented in the table. A description of how the model would scale beyond the desired student population is not provided, however. Further, a discussion of how the partnership and LEA or consortium would build the capacity of staff in participating schools in missing clarity.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This entire proposal coherently and comprehensively addresses how the district will build to create personal learning environments to improve college and career readiness for all students. Further, there are considerable points regarding how SCCSD will decrease achievement gaps and increase graduation rates.

Total	210	138
--------------	------------	------------

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

A large portion of the budget will be obligated to wages and benefits for personnel that will be hired to fill a variety of needs within this project; Especially the eleven schools that have enrollments over 450. Teachers will be paid for four additional days of work during each summer of the project. Each building will be allocated an additional 50 hours each year for their building leadership team to meet. Registration fees for teacher training are also being asked for. Travel expenses will be limited because the majority of the training opportunities will be brought to Sioux City Schools and provided on-site. Travel expenses of the trainers have been included in the contractual price. : Equipment costs will encompass the technological component within the project. To ensure that individual student learning needs are met, technology will be a key tool to provide the supports for struggling and advanced learners. It will also be a key component as teachers and administrators are using data to identify student-learning needs. In the state of Iowa, computing devices and equipment related to computing devices are considered equipment and not supplies. Finally, there are a number of contractual agreements in place in which funds are being requested.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0499IA-2 for Sioux City Community School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant described a comprehensive reform theory, Participatory Action Research, that will be implemented by the proposed project that has four major components that will support and ensure students are prepared for college, the workplace, and able to compete in the global economy through the inclusion of most stakeholder in all phases of the development of educational reform. The project will increase results on state assessments, decrease achievement gap between subgroups, increase graduation rates to 97%, and increase college enrollement all by 20016-17 school year

- The project will focus on redesigning the role of school leader through professional development that includes creating professional learning communities for principals and teachers that will ensure effectiveness in delivery of classroom instruction and effective school management that promotes learning for students.
- The applicant will adopt the state core curriculum standards and develop formative assessments that will be accessible via the data systems that will be created to provide teachers, parents, and students access to real-time academic data.
- The applicant did not discuss how stakeholders beyond school personnel would be included in the creation and design of the project as required with implementation of the PAR theory. The reform theory requires the involvement of all students served to have input into their own educational path but it is unclear how this approach will be utilized for younger students, especially for kindergarten to fifth grade.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
--	-----------	----------

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant intends to ensure reform occurs district-wide therefore all schools and students will participate in the project. The applicant will

serve three high schools, three middle schools and seventeen elementary schools that current provide services for approximately 12,994 students with a district-wide 63% of students qualifying for free-or-reduced lunch.

- The applicant will include in the project the 48 administrators and 991 teachers for professional development and implementation of the project.
- The applicant did not clearly discuss the roles of the 418 support staff also employed since Professional Learning Communities involve all staff on a site not just the principals and teachers to ensure effective learning occurs for students such as instructional aides, technology personnel, or instructional coaches.

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

10

5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

In the planning for the project, the applicant did not indicate how schools would be chosen or rationale for selecting all schools for participation in the project therefore scaling up to district-wide implementation is not an option. The reform model chosen by the applicant to be implemented design is plan then action, revise plan then action, so each school will have a professional development trainer through contractors, Solution Tree and the Leadership Learning Center who will be accessible through on-site visits as well as training sessions with coaching model to leadership teams. The plan has good, quality components that may provide a benefit to some students but not all.

- Training will be offered to teachers in the summer of the first year of implementation of the proposed project and support from on-site trainers during the school year to build knowledge base for effective classroom instruction.
- The applicant did not discuss other strategies that have proven to increase student academic performance or focus on individualized learning that would be provided to staff. Training would occur on use of formative assessments but the formative assessments to be used in the project will be developed during the project year by the teachers. The timeframe for development, testing, validating, or implementation for the assessments were not discussed.

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

10

3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a chart in appendix B of achievable goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties to the project and a narrative that vaguely described how student growth, decreasing the achievement gap between subgroups and increasing graduation requirements would result.

- The applicant discussed increasing alignment of state standards with the Professional Learning Communities which does not guarantee it will transfer into effective classroom instruction and would take time to show effectiveness yet the applicant did not discuss how this will be reviewed, tracked, evaluated, etc. The interventionists and interventions to be implemented are major components of the project but the applicant did not clearly connect these staff to the areas of importance such as increasing graduation rates with interventions for individual students and did not discuss types of interventions that have been successful in the past to support that it would have a significant impact.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's data projections for improvement when using 2011-12 as the baseline year, the increase in graduation rates, decrease in dropout rates, and state assessment results are minimal in the All Students category. The district was able to move from its District In Need of Assistance federal designation in 2010-11 but did not discuss. The applicant indicated that the Superintendent for the district for the past five years has been a key factor but did not support with information beyond his appointment to committees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over a four year period the applicant went from 286 students dropping out of school to 226 in 2010-11 as well as graduation rate increasing from 78% to 84%. • The applicant attributed its moving from DINA status to improvement in reading and math schools supported by a chart of one elementary school that improved to approximately 70% in 2010-11 school year but did not provide data to support improves in the other areas or schools which were the reasons for the designation. The applicant did not clearly discuss the previous methods used to improved student academics for all students beyond the one elementary school. • <i>The applicant provided goals, activities, timelines, and responsible contacts to support the project such as the addition of data managers and interventionists to collect and track data to ensure student results are available and distributed via appropriate reporting.</i> • The applicant did not identify any schools that were persistently low performing which may have been the reason for the DINA designation. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant adheres to the Opening Meetings status and provided a list of the salaries paid to all personnel in the district for the 2010-11 school year but did not indicate the position held by personnel to distinguish teachers and principals from part-time staff or substitutes.

- The applicant indicated several sub-committees that are connected with the school where school/student data is shared and ensures that such information is available to the public via the district website, agendas, and minutes. All salaries are published in a local Journal for public view.*
- The chart provided in appendix F shows personnel cost but the applicant did not discuss or show expenditures for non-personnel such as supplies, equipment, or travel. The applicant did not indicate the funding sources used for expenditures.*

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
--	-----------	----------

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant stated that the proposed project is research-based and within legal guidelines for state, statutory, and regulatory requirements but if changes should occur after implementation due to the Professional Learning Communities strategies, the proposal could adjust as needed to remain in compliance with state statute.

- The applicant indicated that the change is calendar or alternative teaching structures such as grouping different grade levels within the project may occur prior to the state imposing such a change and approval would be obtained from the state to remain in compliance. The applicant plans to keep a close watch on this aspect with meetings and discussions with school leaders.*
- The applicant did not provide adequate additional detail to show that the state supported personalized learning environment.*

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	3
--	-----------	----------

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicated that the proposal is the Action Steps in the Strategic plan that was developed by district personnel. The proposal was then received extensive review from various committees made up of parents, staff, and community representatives but it is not clearly evident that it is aligned.

- The one year strategic plan located in appendix G discusses improvement of student academics through reading interventions for elementary students and the proposal will utilize interventionists only during the grant period as well as coaches who are also discussed in the plan.*
- It is unclear who was involved in developing the proposal and there was not any indication that students and teacher organizations participated or that support for the project is evident beyond the state department and mayor.*

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
---	----------	----------

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided every high school student with a laptop this school year and plans to expand this initiative with the proposal to all elementary and middle school student but did not show how this impacted personalized learning or a clearly show how this would occur.

- After providing tables to all high school students the previous year the applicant stated that putting such technology as laptops in the hands of all elementary and middle students would close the academic or eliminate low socio-economic gap but did not provide supporting results or impact data.*
- The applicant did not discuss how the tablets or laptops were used by the classroom teacher, student, or parents since they were available 24/7, students took them home. The individualize structure is not discussed beyond each student having access to a laptop with internet capabilities from home and school.*

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 will through this proposal align standards and formative assessments to the state Common Core Curriculum to provide world-class curriculum to every student that would prepare them to be lifelong learners through professional development for staff, equipment, supplies, and assessment.

- The design of the proposal professional learning communities will be utilized as a key component to ensuring teachers understand and are committed to delivering the curriculum that will have a positive impact on student learning. The applicant plans to allot time and funds for training outside contract days.*
- The applicant will utilize once approved by the state universal screening tools to be administered three times per year to all*

kindergarten to grade 12 students to check progress and determine if interventions are needed.

- The applicant will create formative assessments to measure student proficiency but it is unclear when they will be available for implementation but if they are not available, the applicant did not discuss what methods would be utilized if any.
- The applicant indicated that due to low socio-economic students not having or being exposed to technology in the home increases the need to be addressed by the project. The applicant indicated that providing technology in the homes of all the middle and elementary school students will allow individualize interventions but did not discuss how this would occur beyond issuing each student a laptop or what types of interventions have proven successful with the delivery method.
- The applicant made an undocumented comparison that students from affluent homes are exposed to technology and are more capable users than non-affluent students such as correlation data to academic data, improved performance, or higher graduation rates.

The applicant did not indicate how parents would be involved in the proposal project beyond having access to a laptop.

- The laptops will be issued to each student for school and home use but the applicant did not discuss and training or activities for parents to support or reinforce learning.

The applicant discussed the use of universal screenings to gauge progress and mastery of content for all students utilizing the ACT for high school students beginning with sophomores.

- The ACT would be administered at least three times to students if seniors choose test to measure college ready standards which would allow time for adjustments in instruction as needed.

The applicant plan will support training for students and teachers on the use and advantages of technology by employing technology coaches.

The applicant indicated that individualized instruction would occur but provided inadequate discussion on how that would occur beyond the standards being taught.

- The laptops may be used as a delivery system for instruction but the applicant provided insufficient information on how screening data and instruction would connect for a struggling student.

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

20

15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will utilize the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Response to Intervention (RtI) models as key components in the project to ensure all staff receive the same training, provided the same tools and resources, and support in delivery of instructional materials.

- The applicant will adhere to the professional development calendar approved by the state and ensure teachers and administrators in the project receive training on PLCs and Common Core Standards in the summer prior to implementation of the proposed project and during the school year. Each school will have a data manager to collect, analyze, train, and share student data for use in progress monitoring and determining the need for interventions.
- The data collection system in place allows teachers and students to access and monitor progress.
- The applicant will provide training for the data managers to support their role in the project therefore it is unclear the qualifications required for this position that implements a critical component of the project. The applicant did not describe the additional training that will be provided or who would provide it.
- The applicant will create a new RtI system during the project for use in the second year of the project that would ensure timely intervention strategies for struggling students but did not discuss what would be used for students during the first year of the project to ensure mastery of grade level content.
- The applicant will provide additional support to teachers and administrators, their Building Leadership Teams through Coaching Academies administered by Solution Tree via contracts. The team will receive more than 50 hours of training each year of the grant that will also address setting high expectations for students, rigor of the new curriculum, how to increase college interest and enrollment, and successful practices. The training will also be used to sustain the project after the grant ends by current staff providing training to new staff.

The plan proposed by the applicant will provide support to teachers in various ways but the system to evaluate effective teaching will be created after the committee review and make recommendations for effective teacher evaluation systems prior to any system selection or timely implementation to support teaching.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant discussed the structure of the central office staff that has allowed the district to move DINA designation that will continue to support all schools participating in the project and support for the Building Leadership Teams (BTL) with professional development that

already has a set calendar.

- Central office personnel are assigned schools to provide on-site support and conduct monthly walk-throughs where that data is collected and used to identify weaknesses and focus on professional development needs.
- The applicant indicated that staff received training in differentiated instruction which when implemented would allow students to mastery content at their own pace but did not connect it to current or planned use with students.
- The applicant identified special needs students that will be continue to be served via the inclusion model, This model lead the applicant to created a dual language where students learn English and Spanish in one elementary and one middle school.
- The applicant indicated that the BLT implements initiatives and share the trainings received during the summer and during the year with teachers at their designated school the project will ensure that information is share in group trainings where all staff will received the same information at the same time fostering more effective implementation and success for students.

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

10

7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a vague discussion of the infrastructure that would ensure all stakeholders would have access to learning tools and technology support.

- The various data managements system to be utilized by the applicant will include items such as budget information, student and staff attendance, grades, and professional development that would be available/accessible.

The web-based system, MyLearningPlan, maintains professional development information and evaluation data accessible by teachers and administrators.

- The system, Pinnacles maintains student information that will allow parents to access/view data but not export grades and progress reports of students from home if they have internet access. The applicant previously discussed that 25% of the families surveyed did not have access to the internet in their homes to use this feature. The applicant did not discuss if or how internet services would be made available to families who did not have it.
- The applicant indicated that the laptops issued to students is supported by the current system, Canvas that allows students to download class assignments that is beneficial also for students who may have missed class to have the opportunity to not fall behind.
- The applicant did not clearly discuss which systems would be accessible by stakeholders who were not staff or parents such as community, business leaders who may support activities in the school/project.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicated that the proposed project is the conversion of the action steps in the one year strategic plan. The many components of the proposal are much greater detail that is not supported by input from stakeholders for ensure fidelity of the PAR Reform Theory supporting the project.

- The proposal received initial review and comment utilizing the same process used for the strategic plan yet the plan is reviewed annually therefore if the project is only review once per year to revise goals, making revisions to the proposal would only occur once per year which would be inadequate to affect student progress during the year.
- The applicant indicated that the program review will occur at the end of the second year of implementation which is inadequate for overall change.
- The applicant described a strong investment is professional development for teachers with the intent that trainer-of-trainers activities would sustain the project and no longer have a need for additional staff to complete certain activities when the grant ends.

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

5

3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has internal and external committees that will be utilized to share information about the project.

- The Student Achievement Committee meets quarterlay and an annual update to the District Advisory Committee, and school board would be available. The applicant would utilize the district website and the Sioux City Journal to share successes. These venues do not allow for input for revisions.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant described adequate assessment instruments to support identified performance measures per grade level.

- The applicant currently administers the Developmental Reading Assessment 2 for grades 1-5 as a universal screener that identifies students struggling in reading and Basic Reading Inventory (BRI) will be purchased for student in grades 6-12 that will provide three levels of proficiency that would be administered throughout the year, the frequency of this administration was not discussed therefore it is unclear how timely the results would be available for interventions. The BRI also will be a new tool for the project therefore training on how to evaluate the results was not discussed.
- The applicant also described other appropriate instruments that also screen and progress monitor to be used with the same grade levels such as DIBLES for kindergarten to grade six and AIMSWeb for kindergarten to grade eight. It is unclear with the instruments that cross grade levels when they would be administered to the same students, the rationale for multiple instruments, or the frequency of screening and progress monitoring was not discussed.
- The applicant indicated that the DIBLES instrument would be administered three times per year that would allow timely interventions as needed.
- The applicant plans to utilize data from the spring state assessments administered for grades three to eight and eleven to determine mastery in reading and math and report results which would very little time during the school year for interventions at that grade level.
- The applicant has partnered with the Lumina Foundation to track students completing the Free Applicant for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The Foundation will also provide support to those students who do complete the application to completion. The applicant implied but did not support with data that completion of the application correlates to enrolling in college therefore meeting one of the goals of the project to increase enrollement in college.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
--	----------	----------

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide a strong plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities connected to implementation of the project such as professional development, roles of key staff, or use of technology.

- *The participants in the professional development will complete a survey on how well or if the strategies meet their needs but how that information would be incorporated in the project was not discussed..*
- *Eventhough the program will be reviewed at the end of the second year and presented to committees it is unclear if that also includes the budget for redistribution of funds to support areas that may have been identified as needed different or more support than originally anticipated. The program review is vague with limited discussion on gathering feedback and its incorporation in the project prior to grant ending.*

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget proposed is adequate for most of the activities in the project and currently supported by Title I funds due to DINA status and a grant from Lumnia Foundation.

- *The budget does not discuss or provide training for parents on the activities, use of technology, or their supportive role in the education of their child. The applicant will utilize grant funds to replace servers in older buildings to support the technology yet for the students taking laptops home who per the parent survey indicated that internet access was not available, the applicant with other funds or this project addressed it.*

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant discussed a plan to continue to support the project goals through other funds and partnerships while building capacity throughout the grant period which adds additional duties to teachers to take over other duties previously handled by a full team.

- *The applicant will add approximately 80 new staff to provide services to implement the project. Many of these positions will be phased-out as the grant progress such as the critical role of the data managers. These duties would be added to the teachers who are also adjusting to a new curriculum, evaluation process, and instructional strategies may not have the quality time to devote to these tasks to ensure the same level of quality remains.*
- *The applicant will utilize current staff who would have received several hours of professional development, created an Rtl model, and created formative assessments for monitoring student progress and driving instruction as trainer of trainers to continue to make progress in meeting the needs of students.*
- *The applicant have partnerships that provide other services to students but it is unclear if the partners will provide monetary support to the project after the grant ends to sustain activities and progress.*

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identified several organizations that provide services to all students but especially students who qualify for the free and reduced lunch program and their families that are aligned to support social, emotional, and behavioral issues affecting academics improvement.

- The strong existing partnerships such as United Way in collaboration with other organizations provide services to children to prepare them to enter kindergarten with a six-week summer camp with activities aligned with student achievement. Big Brothers-Big Sisters provide school-based mentoring program focusing on student expectations, graduation, and college interests.
- Partnerships appear to have been in place and functional prior to this proposal and support will continue.
- The applicant did not discuss how staff and parents would be involved in building or sustaining partnerships.
- The applicant provided charts of the performance measure for students grades 3-12 and all subgroups effected by the partnerships showing alignment with the vision of the proposal.
- The applicant did not discuss how the services through the partnerships would or could be scaled.
- It is unclear the estimated total number of students being served by the partners or how the partners would track their progress in the performance measures provided.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describe a reasonable plan that would need to be strengthen using the Participatory Action Research reform model to implement a plan to improve student achievement through personalized learning strategies that involve all stakeholders in student success.

Total	210	124
--------------	------------	------------



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0499IA-3 for Sioux City Community School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

--	--	--

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The Sioux City Community School District, the fourth largest district in Iowa, proposes to reform educational practices by 1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy, 2) building data systems that measure student growth and cusses and inform teachers and principals with data, 3) recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most, and 4) turn around the lowest-achieving schools. In order to meet these goals they have proposed high-quality training for all teachers and administrators. The high-quality training will include development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), understanding state standards, developing formative assessments aligned to those standards, understanding and developing Response to Intervention systems (RtI) and increasing the rigor of the curriculum. Based on a thorough review of the application, it is not apparent that the proposal articulates a clear and credible approach to each of the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. The development of PLCs, common assessments tied to the curriculum, and RtI partially address the first two core assurance areas. It is not clear that the district has the infrastructure in place, or planned, to be able to build a data system that informs teachers and principals about how to improve instruction. This work will essentially be conducted by data-managers, who will be phased out after the conclusion of the grant period. Additionally, it is not apparent in the proposal that there is a systematic way to recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals. The proposal lists rate of effective and highly effective teachers and principals, but not how this designation is arrived at. Finally, since the proposal is written to include the entire district there is no indication of which are the lowest performing schools and how they will be turned around even though the district was previously labeled as a District in Need of Assistance. As a result, this section rates in the mid range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>In an effort to bring reform to scale within the district Sioux City Schools will include all 23 schools in the district in the project. Based on 2011 – 2012 enrollment figures approximately 58.3% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch, 2012 – 2013 estimates identify approximately 63% of students as qualifying. These figures suggest that Sioux City Schools collectively meet the 40% eligibility requirement. A list of all schools in the district with appropriate demographics is included in the application including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> total number of participating students – 12,994 participating students from low income families – 8,087 participating students who are high need – 2,849 participating educators - 953 <p>Based on a full district-wide implementation and the fact that the ultimate success hinges on teacher buy-in to the PLC process it is questionable that the project can be successful throughout the district.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The plan is based on a theory of change focused on the development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). In an effort to bring change to the Sioux City Schools the district will partner with Solution Tree and The Leadership and Learning Center to provide training and coaching to teachers and administrators in the district. Training and coaching in the areas of PLC Model, formative assessment, and RtI are included. The plan proposed is not considered high-quality due to several factors.</p> <p>A. The activities to be undertaken will scale out over a period of three years, beginning with PLC training, followed by formative assessment development, and concluding with RtI training. The belief is that based on these specific professional development initiatives, individualized learning initiatives will result. However, prior to the establishment of common formative assessments it will not be possible to create the individualized plans, for which the professional development occurs at the end of the cycle with RtI.</p> <p>B. The deliverables for the project can also be seen as the key goals. The goals, based on the student learning gains listed, bring nearly all students to 100% proficiency in a 4 year period. Based on the timeline to implementation and the lack of a prior track record in achieving these large order gains, there is no evidence to support that this can happen.</p> <p>C. The overall credibility of the plan is in question because of the student achievement gains and achievement discrepancy decreases expected are unrealistic given the time to full implementation and apparent lack of individualized instruction and monitoring. Additionally, the proposal does not explicitly state how the partnering agencies will develop a specific plan of action for Sioux City Schools and their particular needs including the improvement of student learning outcomes for each individual student. Due to the lack of specifics for how the proposal will be translated into meaningful reform, this section rates in the mid range.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3
(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>There is insufficient evidence to suggest that the district's project is likely to result in improved student learning and performance to the degree</p>		

to which they have proposed. The proposal does not include any evidence that a culture change through the use of PLCs will result in a 10% decrease in achievement discrepancy between subgroups that have historically had little change leading to increased equity.

a) The performance on summative assessments are ambitious but it is arguable that they are achievable. Some groups within individual schools will be expected to gain in excess of 60 points on the assessment in a 4 year period. The proposal does not include data upon which to base these projections.

b) It is proposed that the district will close achievement gaps within a 4 year time period, again ambitious but not likely achievable as evidenced by, in some instances up to 50 point gaps at selected schools (Native American/White, IEP/Not IEP, Hispanic/White, ELL/Not ELL).

c) Due to the fact that the district has relatively high graduation rates, 82% or greater overall with the lowest subgroup at approximately 61%, it would appear that the proposed targets are ambitious and possibly achievable.

d) While the district's proposal does not indicate how it will increase college enrollment rates they have proposed an approximately 10 percentage point gain which is both ambitious and potentially achievable.

Given the nature (PLCs, Assessments, RtI) and timeline of the implementation (3 years) the proposal is overly ambitious. It is unrealistic to believe that while increasing rigor with the new standards the district will, simultaneously, be able to see large gains in student achievement based on formative assessments through the use of PLCs. If the combination of approaches is successful it will take at least 3 years to see significant academic gains as it appears that individualizing instruction will appear in year 3 with the implementation of RtI. While it is possible that graduation and college enrollment target rates could be met, there is no evidence to suggest this will be the result of the proposed program. While the rates are ambitious they are likely not achievable and there is little evidence to suggest gains could be attributed to the proposed program, as a result this section rates in the low-mid 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	8
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The Sioux City Schools have not, in the past 4 years, demonstrated a clear record of success in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity.</p> <p>a. In the past year (2011- 2012) the district's status as a District in Need of Assistance by the state of Iowa, was removed and placed on Delay status. This change in classification was the result of meeting AYP in math grades 3-5 and reading grade 11. The district cites a focus on professional development as the reason for these improvements. The district has seen increased graduation rates over the past three years from 78% to 84%. The proposal includes self-report intention rates for college enrollment but only one year of college enrollment rates.</p> <p>b. The proposal identifies four reforms as evidence of advancing students learning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) focus on professional development 2) standards based report cards, 3) updated facilities, 4) 1:1 laptop initiative. <p>Of the reforms listed only one, 1:1 laptop initiative, could be seen as particularly ambitious or significant as the other 3 are within the typical work of a school. Additionally, the proposal does not indicate how the 1:1 initiative specifically impacts student learning. The 1:1 does increase equity, but there is little connection to persistently underperforming schools or students. The proposal highlights one particular school as having the highest free and reduced rate and largest population of special education students, but did not identify this school as a persistently low achieving school and attributes achievement gains to focusing instruction on standards and standards-based report cards.</p> <p>c. The proposal states that student achievement data is reported by building and district and can be found on the district website. While this data is available to the public, including students, parents, and educators, it is not used in a way that informs and improves participation, instruction, and services. There is a lack of intentionality with respect to the sharing of data with each stakeholder group therefore instruction can not be systematically improved for each individual student.</p> <p>Sioux City Schools have clearly worked to improve equity within their district through the updating of facilities and their 1:1 laptop initiative. Thus far, however, their reforms have not been shown to clearly improve student learning outcomes, close achievement gaps, or impact persistently low achieving schools. Additionally, while their data is publicly available it is not utilized in a systematic manner to inform and improve instruction. This section rates in the middle of the mid-range.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

The Sioux City Schools publish, on an annual basis, the salaries of all staff members in the district in the Sioux City Journal. Additionally, the district publishes an annual progress report that includes student achievement data, student demographic data, fiscal information (non-personnel expenditures), graduation and dropout rates, and employment trends.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The components of the personalized learning environments proposed by Sioux City Schools would fall within the context of daily instruction. The development of PLCs and the use of Rtl would fall within state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements. The use of Rtl and PLCs do not differ significantly from the usual day-to-day activities of the classroom.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	3
--	-----------	----------

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Sioux City Schools took the necessary steps to invite meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of and support for the proposal with the exception of students and parents. The proposal was shared with the Sioux City Education Association, district leadership, Northwest Area Education Agency leadership, the school board, head teachers, the Mayor of Sioux City, and the Director of the Iowa Department of Education. Letters of support were included from the Mayor of Sioux City and the Northwest Area Education Agency. There is insufficient evidence to support the full inclusion of students or their families. There is also insufficient evidence that the proposal has the support of teachers at-large in the district. There is also no specific evidence presented in terms of how the proposal was modified based upon any stakeholder feedback, one statement suggested that the formative assessment certification was developed in response to the SCEA wanting to include local experts, but it is not clear how local expertise is incorporated as one of the external vendors will be leading the training. A lack of clear support or inclusion of all stakeholders results in a mid range rating.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
---	----------	----------

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The plan is based on a theory of change focused on the development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). In an effort to bring change to the Sioux City Schools the district will partner with Solution Tree and The Leadership and Learning Center to provide training and coaching to teachers and administrators in the district. Training and coaching in the areas of PLC Model, formative assessment, and Rtl are included. Based on a thorough review of the application, it is not apparent that the proposal articulates a clear and credible approach to each of the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests.

The plan proposed is not considered high-quality due to several factors.

A. The activities to be undertaken will scale out over a period of three years, beginning with PLC training, followed by formative assessment development, and concluding with Rtl training. The belief is that based on these specific professional development initiatives, individualized learning initiatives will result. However, prior to the establishment of common formative assessments it will not be possible to create the individualized plans, for which the professional development occurs at the end of the cycle with Rtl.

B. The goals, based on the student learning gains listed, bring nearly all students to 100% proficiency in a 4 year period. Based on the timeline to implementation and the lack of a prior track record in achieving these large order gains, there is no evidence to support that this can happen.

C. The overall credibility of the plan is in question because of the student achievement gains and achievement discrepancy decreases expected are unrealistic given the time to full implementation and apparent lack of individualized instruction and monitoring. Additionally, the proposal does not explicitly state how the partnering agencies will develop a specific plan of action for Sioux City Schools and their particular needs including the improvement of student learning outcomes for each individual student.

D. The Sioux City Schools proposal has not clearly articulated the relationship between the use of technology in a 1:1 environment and the development of formative assessments, Rtl, writing, and PLCs. These seem to be two separate initiatives rather than one cohesive whole. The intention of the technology is to address the technological and achievement gap between low and high socio-economic students, who have a 20% difference on Iowa assessments. The proposal states that the technology will allow for a personal learning environment for each student, but the proposed professional development does not include the use of the technology to increase student achievement.

The lack of a relationship between standards, assessments, and the utilization of technology to inform students and create a personalized learning environment results in a low range score.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Sioux City Schools have implemented rigorous graduation standards (four years of English, three years of math, science and social studies, one year of fine arts and half year of health and physical education each semester) along with increasing the rigor of the curriculum through the use of the Common Core Curriculum (referred to as the Iowa Common Core, ICC). The district plans to provide high quality professional development to more tightly align instruction to the ICC and thus increase student achievement. Additionally, through the use of PLC training and common formative assessments the district believes it will be able to better identify students who are struggling or are not proficient. To assist these students the proposal states that the district will “be more successful in providing interventions and meeting the individual student needs by increasing the availability of technology to students”.

- a. While it is clear that the college and career standards being utilized and rigorous graduation requirements will include the mastering of critical academic content and the development of traits such as perseverance, critical thinking, creativity and problem solving, it is not clear that students will develop an understanding of the relationship between what they are learning and success in accomplishing these goals. The 1:1 laptop initiative, while extremely worthwhile, seems to be more focused on addressing socioeconomic disparities rather than being utilized with deliberate intentionality to deepen student learning or assist in the measurement and progress toward learning goals.
- b. The plan proposed does not include the critical component of providing updated individual student data that can be used to determine progress toward mastery of the standards. As a result, students cannot be provided with personalized learning recommendations in order to take ownership of their learning. The use of PLCs and universal screeners will assist teachers in providing the necessary accommodations for students who are not on track, but the proposal does not include how the use of these will lead to a variety of high-quality instructional approaches or high quality content.
- c. There is no indication in the proposal that students will be trained to ensure that they understand how to use the technology provided to them. Additionally, it is not clear that the technology will be used to track and manage learning relative to specific standards or benchmarks.

The proposed plan is focused on teacher professional development through the use of PLCs to more tightly align standards and instruction. The use of technology is ancillary to the primary focus of the proposal. The proposal as written does not provide an approach that engages and empowers learners to understand and relate standards to success and does not ensure access to a personalized sequence of content and skill activities for remediation or enrichment. The resulting score is in the low range.

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

20

4

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Sioux City Schools proposal is focused on teacher professional development with the goal of improving student learning outcomes, improving graduation rates, and increasing college enrollment rates.

- a. The proposal, as written, does not specifically address the development of personalized learning environments for individual students resulting from the teacher professional development. There is an expectation that all teachers will engage in the PLC process and leaders will embed PLCs in their schools. During the first summer of implementation Solution Tree will provide a 2 day PLC training and the Leadership and Learning Center will provide training on Common Core Standards and formative assessment. The assumption is that teachers will be able to develop high-functioning PLCs immediately, develop and institute common assessments, and adapt content and instruction for each individual student. The structure of the training sessions was not discussed making it unclear as to how these goals will be accomplished with 4 days of training. In year 2 of the grant, teachers will receive professional development on Rtl, this training is expected to assist in the systematic and personalized response to each student. The proposal does not indicate how teachers will frequently measure student progress toward college and career standards. The improvement of teachers’ and principals’ practice and feedback is not addressed other than to say that a committee will study the current system and other effective systems and will develop a final report and recommendations.
- b. The proposal states that the Pinnacle Insight program captures and displays data at the student, teacher, cohort, building and district levels. The district plans to hire full-time data managers to collect, analyze and lead discussions on student data with teachers and administrators. The data-managers will be critical to the success of the project and will need to be highly skilled professionals who can analyze data and be able to give actionable advice related to classroom instruction and programmatic decision-making. It was not discussed how these individuals will be trained, only that it will happen. At the conclusion of the grant, the work of the data-managers will be shifted to teachers. There is no evidence provided as to how this work will be effectively and efficiently transferred.
- c. There is limited evidence that school leaders and leadership teams will be provided with the training, policies, tools, data, and resources to enable them to develop an effective learning environment that accelerates student progress. The proposal will rely on the expertise of outside consultants to provide the necessary training, the Pinnacle Insight data system captures and displays data, but there is no discussion about the specific types of data, how it will be modified based on new assessments, and there is not data to suggest that it is currently being used in this capacity. There is no discussion about the relationship between the teacher evaluation system and steps to improve individual and collective effectiveness. Evidence does exist to suggest that after the grant period the district will continue with implementation and training in the PLC process using district staff development funds.
- d. The proposal does not include a plan for increasing the number of students who have access to or receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

The Sioux City Schools proposal is not considered a high-quality plan due to a lack of a systematic approach to the development of personalized learning environments based on the use data. Additionally, the approach fails to include how the teacher and leader evaluation systems can be used to improve teacher and leader effectiveness resulting in an increase in the number of students who have access to effective and highly effective teachers and principals. This results in a score in the low range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	6
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Sioux City Schools have provided insufficient evidence that a plan has been developed that every student, educator, and level of the education system with sufficient autonomy, support, and resources when and where needed.</p> <p>a. The central office structure at Sioux City Schools has been “flattened” moving central office staff into schools providing more direct links, access, and visibility with at least 25 walkthroughs in classrooms each month. While direct connections and support are a strength for the district, based on the lack of autonomy at the building level this reinforces the view that practices, policies and rules are instituted in a top-down manner.</p> <p>b. There is insufficient evidence that school leadership teams, including the Building Leadership Teams (BLTs) are provided with sufficient flexibility and autonomy. BLT work will be shifted to “focus on implementation and sustainability, not providing the knowledge base.” There is no evidence to suggest the BLTs have control over schedules, calendars, personnel decisions, staffing models, or roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>c. Sioux City Schools are in the development phase of standards-based grading, with plans to implement district-wide. Some individual courses utilize performance-based assessments, but it is not systematic. There is no evidence that students, under the current structure with the exception of elementary school students, can progress based on demonstrated mastery.</p> <p>d. With the exception of differentiated instruction in individual classrooms evidence is not presented to demonstrate that students are given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.</p> <p>e. Sioux City Schools practices an inclusion model, however other than developing a dual language immersion program no evidence is reported to support the providing of adaptable and accessible learning resources to students with disabilities or English language learners.</p> <p>Based on a lack of flexibility and autonomy, limited use of standards-based assessment, non-systematic use of differentiated instruction, and lack of evidence to support the providing of adaptable and accessible learning resources for all students including those with disabilities and English learners this category is rated in the low-mid range.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Sioux City Schools have provided insufficient evidence that the LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning.</p> <p>a. There is sufficient evidence that all participating students and stakeholders will have sufficient access to the necessary content, tools, and other learning resources. The 1:1 laptop initiative will be expanded to the middle school along with the Canvas system, which allows access to materials and information and all students will be in classes with teachers who are members of a PLC.</p> <p>b. There is evidence that staff will be provided with the necessary support through the use of additional building technicians. It is unclear, however, that there will be adequate support for students and parents. With the addition to East, West, and North Middle Schools to the 1:1 program, totaling 2,945 students, it seems unrealistic to assume that one full-time staff member will be able to provide adequate support.</p> <p>c. Sioux City Schools uses several interoperable data systems. However, the majority of these systems are utilized by the district or teachers for absence management, financial systems, or professional development tracking and evaluation. Only Pinnacle Insight provides data related to student information and it is unclear as to whether students and families can utilize the full functionality or only the gradebook option.</p> <p>d. There district utilizes interoperable data systems, but it does not appear that they are utilized in a manner that supports personalized learning.</p> <p>Although Sioux City Schools utilizes interoperable data systems and provides students with laptops, there is insufficient evidence that they can provide the needed support. Additionally, it is apparent that the data systems have not been configured in such a way as to support personalized learning for students. This results in a low rating.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score

(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Sioux City Schools proposal’s continuous improvement process rests squarely on the ability of teachers, through training, to analyze data and engage in collaborate conversations in order to adjust instruction as needed. Teacher teams will develop SMART goals that will be analyzed at the end of the year by teacher teams. Additionally, the Directors of elementary and secondary education who will be expected to provide data and evidence of student learning, strategies, and interventions with rationale. The district plans to conduct a program review at the end of the second year to be shared with administrative committees and the school board. The process, as written, would not be considered a rigorous continuous improvement cycle that provides timely and regular feedback toward the project goals. Quarterly “snapshot” meetings and a review after year two does not address how the district will monitor and measure the quality of the intervention. Additionally, sharing results with district administrative committees and the school board are insufficient for public sharing of the ongoing project. Lack of evidence for a rigorous continuous improvement cycle and insufficient public transparency result in a low range score.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Sioux City Schools project will be included on the quarterly agenda of the Student Achievement Committee and updates will be given to Cabinet and LEAD individuals. The public will be informed via prepared press releases to the Sioux City Journal about updates to the project and specific “short-term wins” communicated within school buildings. While there is sufficient evidence that the status project will be communicated to district administrators, the public, and teachers, there is little evidence that there will be active engagement with these internal and external stakeholders. The lack of evidence related to engagement results in a mid-level rating.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Sioux City Schools proposal identified the following performance measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. percentage of students taught by a highly effective teacher/principal (all students) 2. percentage of students taught by an effective teacher/principal (all students) <p>The data presented suggests that every teacher in the Sioux City Schools district is at least effective. In the baseline year (2011 – 2012) 33% of all teachers were highly effective and 66% effective and 19% of principals were highly effective and 32% effective. There is no discussion as to how this determination was made.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Iowa Assessments for Reading (Grades 3-5, 6-8, 11) 4. Iowa Assessments for Mathematics (Grades 3-5, 6-8, 11) <p>The Iowa Assessments are summative and administered each spring. The National Standard Score most accurately communicates student academic growth and students meeting or exceeding the expected growth will be reported.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Common Assessments Mathematics (Grades 6-8, Pre-algebra, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry) 6. Common Assessments Language Arts (Grades 6-8, English I, English II, English III) 7. Common Assessments Science (Grades 6-8, Health, Biology I, Physics) 8. Common Assessments Social Studies (Grades 6-8, American Government, Economics, World History) <p>Common assessments were developed by each core content department and aligned to the Iowa Core Curriculum standards. They are administered quarterly and are used as a universal screener and on-track indicator for college and career readiness. A “passing” score of 80% will be reported.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. DRA 2 (Grades 1-5) <p>The Developmental Reading Assessment 2 will be administered twice per year as a measure of student achievement. The district plans to report the percentage of students achieving in the expected range for their grade level.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Basic Reading Inventory (Grades 6-12) <p>The BRI will be used as a universal screener and administered periodically throughout the year, the district will report the percentage of</p>		

students reading at the “Independent Level” by the end of the year.

11. AIMS web (Grades K-8)

AIMS web will be utilized as a universal screener and for progress monitoring in mathematics.

12. Dibels (Grades K-6)

The Dibels will be used for universal screening and progress monitoring and will be administered 3 times per year.

13. Iowa Youth Survey (Grades 6, 8, 11)

The Iowa Youth Survey is conducted by the Iowa Department of Public Health in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Education. The questions on the survey pertaining to bullying, school safety, and caring adults within the school will be monitored and utilized to determine successful implementation of the project.

14. Average Daily Attendance (K-12)

15. FAFSA completion

16. Graduation rate

The district will report on average daily attendance for all grades. The district is attempting to improve their ability to obtain FAFSA completion rates with assistance from the Lumina Foundation. The district will report disaggregated graduation rates.

The plan includes several overlapping indicators, but they are not coherently sequenced so that specific progress for each student can be monitored over time. The relationship between each of the assessments is unclear, along with which will be used for formative purposes and which for summative purposes or both. Common Assessments comprise the bulk of both formative and summative assessments at the high school level. The 80% pass rate is listed as proficient, however there is no discussion as to how this figure was arrived at. Additionally, these assessments are reported to be tightly aligned to the Iowa Core Curriculum, however the proposal calls for professional development in which teachers will be trained in the development of common assessments to more tightly align instruction and standards. It is expected that the Iowa Youth Survey will serve as the grade-appropriate social or emotional leading indicator of successful implementation, however this assessment is only utilized in middle and high school (grades 6, 8, and 11) therefore the k-3 students will not have at least one age appropriate non-cognitive indicator of growth. The lack of systematic use and analysis provides less than rigorous, timely and formative leading information tailored to the plan and a lack of discussion about how Sioux City Schools will review and improve measures over time results in a low range score.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Sioux City Schools plans to formally review the effectiveness of the project in the second year. The review will be based on reviews of each of the goal areas. Professional development will be evaluated by participants and data managers will review the analysis and collection of data. The proposal lacks specifics with regard to which specific goals will be evaluated and the metrics used for those evaluations along with a timeline for evaluation, resulting in a low rating.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes a narrative and supplemental narrative response accounting for the grant funds and listing any additional funds.

a. In addition to grant funds, Sioux City Schools have identified the following additional resources: Federal Title I \$300,000, District General Fund \$200,000, State allocated teacher quality funds \$600,000, State Allocated ICC \$300,000 (tentative).

b. Questions remain about the continued viability once the grant period and funds expire. The proposal assumes that the new positions will be one-time costs, but given the amount of data to manage there should be a more detailed description of the succession plan. Additionally, there is no explanation of how the district will continue to fund the technology initiative and software and assessment licensing fees after the end of the grant period.

c. Sioux City Schools provided an acceptable rationale for the allocation of all funds. The vast majority are allocated as one-time including personnel. However, the proposal does not include the process or funding by which they will continue to procure new technology over time. It is assumed based on the proposal that the majority of external funds will be utilized after the grant period to continue the work of the PLCs. All additional funds will continue to be utilized for the purpose of teacher professional development. Approximate fund allocations are as follows: Personnel \$15,649,494, Travel \$540,000, Equipment \$5,491,300, Supplies \$1,905,000, Contracted Services \$2,241,198, Other (software/licensing) \$2,560,950.

The section includes the necessary components and the rationale is reasonable and sufficient, however sustainability is questionable resulting in a mid-level score.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
---	-----------	----------

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal does not include a projection as to how the project can be sustained after the term of the grant expires. If current Iowa legislation remains intact, the district will use currently allocated funds to support professional development along with the Area Education Agency. However, the grant will be funding professional development outside of the expertise of the AEA, through two vendors. There is insufficient evidence that the current funds could be utilized to continue to receive training/support from Solution Tree and/or The Leadership and Learning Center. Additionally, the district has not indicated how they will continue to fund the technology initiative or assessment licensing fees after the conclusion of the grant. Overall, there is a lack of support for this being a sustainable project leading to a low score.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Sioux City Schools identified 11 specific community agencies with which they partner that serve qualifying students within the district. The proposal includes at least two educational outcomes for each partnership that are related to the broader proposal. The proposal does not describe how:

- a. the tracking of these selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregated level for participating students
- b. how the data will be used to target resources to improve results for participating students
- c. describe a strategy to scale the model beyond participating students
- d. demonstrate continuous improvement

While nearly all of these programs will address social-emotional and/or behavioral needs it is unclear as to how they will be integrated with education. The proposal does not indicate how they will build the capacity of staff by providing them supports and tools to:

- a. assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the programs goals
- b. identify and assess the needs and assets of the school and community
- c. create a decision making process and an infrastructure to evaluate the supports that address individual student needs
- d. engage parents and families in an effort to assist in decision-making and solutions for improvement over time
- e. routinely assess individual participant progress to maximize impact

Performance measures are listed as desired results, but the results are listed in generic terms such as "increase student achievement" and are not targeted to specific desired outcomes. Therefore, ambitious yet achievable performance measures are not indicated. Due to a lack of detail about how each partnership will be developed, which students will be included, how their performance will be evaluated, lack of engagement/partnership with families/parents, and lack of a continuous improvement plan based on results this section scores in the low range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

There is minimal evidence to support that Sioux City Schools application has met Absolute Priority 1. The development of PLCs, common assessments tied to the curriculum, and RtI partially address the first two core assurance areas. It is not clear that the district has the

infrastructure in place, or planned, to be able to build a data system that informs teachers and principals about how to improve instruction, but the district plans have have the work conducted by data-managers, who will be phased out after the conclusion of the grant period. Additionally, there is limited evidence in the proposal that there is a systematic way to recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals. The proposal lists rate of effective and highly effective teachers and principals, but not how this designation is arrived at. Finally, since the proposal is written to include the entire district there is no indication of which are the lowest performing schools and how they will be turned around even though the district was previously labeled as a District in Need of Assistance. As a result, Absolute Priority 1 was minimally met.

Total	210	82
--------------	------------	-----------