ESEA Flexibility

Request

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Washington, DC 20202

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) is offering each State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies (LEAs), and its schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This voluntary opportunity will provide educators and State and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. This flexibility is intended to build on and support the significant State and local reform efforts already underway in critical areas such as transitioning to college- and career-ready standards and assessments; developing systems of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support; and evaluating and supporting teacher and principal effectiveness.

The Department invites interested SEAs to request this flexibility pursuant to the authority in section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which allows the Secretary to waive, with certain exceptions, any statutory or regulatory requirement of the ESEA for an SEA that receives funds under a program authorized by the ESEA and requests a waiver. Under this flexibility, the Department would grant waivers through the 2013–2014 school year, after which time an SEA may request an extension of this flexibility.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF REQUESTS

The Department will use a review process that will include both external peer reviewers and staff reviewers to evaluate SEA requests for this flexibility. This review process will help ensure that each request for this flexibility approved by the Department is consistent with the principles described in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which are designed to support State efforts to improve student academic achievement and increase the quality of instruction, and is both educationally and technically sound. Reviewers will evaluate whether and how each request for this flexibility will support a comprehensive and coherent set of improvements in the areas of standards and assessments, accountability, and teacher and principal effectiveness that will lead to improved student outcomes. Each SEA will have an opportunity, if necessary, to clarify its plans for peer and staff reviewers and to answer any questions reviewers may have. The peer reviewers will then provide comments to the Department. Taking those comments into consideration, the Secretary will make a decision regarding each SEA's request for this flexibility. If an SEA's request for this flexibility is not granted, reviewers and the Department will provide feedback to the SEA about the components of the SEA's request that need additional development in order for the request to be approved.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

An SEA seeking approval to implement this flexibility must submit a high-quality request that addresses all aspects of the principles and waivers and, in each place where a plan is required, includes a high-quality plan. Consistent with ESEA section 9401(d)(1), the Secretary intends to grant waivers that are included in this flexibility through the end of the 2013–2014 school year. An SEA will be permitted to request an extension of the initial period of this flexibility prior to the start of the 2014–2015 school year unless this flexibility is superseded by reauthorization of the ESEA. The Department is asking SEAs to submit requests that include plans through the 2014–2015 school year in order to provide a complete picture of the SEA's reform efforts. The Department will not accept a request that meets only some of the principles of this flexibility.

This version of the *ESEA Flexibility Request* replaces the document originally issued on September 23, 2011 and revised on September 28, 2011. Through this revised version, the following section has been removed: 3.A, Option B (Option C has been renamed Option B). Additions have also been made to the following sections: Waivers and Assurances. Finally, this revised guidance modifies the following sections: Waivers; Assurances; 2.A.ii; 2.C.i; 2.D.i; 2.E.i; Table 2; 2.G; and 3.A, Options A and B.

High-Quality Request: A high-quality request for this flexibility is one that is comprehensive and coherent in its approach, and that clearly indicates how this flexibility will help an SEA and its LEAs improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students.

A high-quality request will (1) if an SEA has already met a principle, provide a description of how it has done so, including evidence as required; and (2) if an SEA has not yet met a principle, describe how it will meet the principle on the required timelines, including any progress to date. For example, an SEA that has not adopted minimum guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with Principle 3 by the time it submits its request for the flexibility will need to provide a plan demonstrating that it will do so by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. In each such case, an SEA's plan must include, at a minimum, the following elements for each principle that the SEA has not yet met:

1. Key milestones and activities: Significant milestones to be achieved in order to meet a given principle, and essential activities to be accomplished in order to reach the key milestones. The SEA should also include any essential activities that have already been completed or key milestones that have already been reached so that reviewers can understand the context for and fully evaluate the SEA's plan to meet a given principle.

2. Detailed timeline: A specific schedule setting forth the dates on which key activities will begin and be completed and milestones will be achieved so that the SEA can meet the principle by the required date.

3. Party or parties responsible: Identification of the SEA staff (*e.g.*, position, title, or office) and, as appropriate, others who will be responsible for ensuring that each key activity is accomplished.

4. Evidence: Where required, documentation to support the plan and demonstrate the SEA's progress in implementing the plan. This *ESEA Flexibility Request* indicates the specific evidence that the SEA must either include in its request or provide at a future reporting date.

5. Resources: Resources necessary to complete the key activities, including staff time and additional funding.

6. Significant obstacles: Any major obstacles that may hinder completion of key milestones and activities (*e.g.,* State laws that need to be changed) and a plan to overcome them.

Included on page 19 of this document is an example of a format for a table that an SEA may use to submit a plan that is required for any principle of this flexibility that the SEA has not already met. An SEA that elects to use this format may also supplement the table with text that provides an overview of the plan.

An SEA should keep in mind the required timelines for meeting each principle and develop credible plans that allow for completion of the activities necessary to meet each principle. Although the plan for each principle will reflect that particular principle, as discussed above, an SEA should look across all plans to make sure that it puts forward a comprehensive and coherent request for this flexibility.

Preparing the Request: To prepare a high-quality request, it is extremely important that an SEA refer to all of the provided resources, including the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which includes the principles, definitions, and timelines; the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, which includes the criteria that will be used by the peer reviewers to determine if the request meets the principles of this flexibility; and the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions,* which provides additional guidance for SEAs in preparing their requests.

As used in this request form, the following terms have the definitions set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*: (1) college- and career-ready standards, (2) focus school, (3) high-quality assessment, (4) priority school, (5) reward school, (6) standards that are common to a significant number of States, (7) State network of institutions of higher education, (8) student growth, and (9) turnaround principles.

Each request must include:

- A table of contents and a list of attachments, using the forms on pages 1 and 2.
- The cover sheet (p. 3), waivers requested (p. 4-6), and assurances (p. 7-8).
- A description of how the SEA has met the consultation requirements (p. 9).
- Evidence and plans to meet the principles (p. 10-18). An SEA will enter narrative text in the text boxes provided, complete the required tables, and provide other required evidence. An SEA may supplement the narrative text in a text box with attachments, which will be included in an appendix. Any supplemental attachments that are included in an appendix must be referenced in the related narrative text.

Requests should not include personally identifiable information.

Process for Submitting the Request: An SEA must submit a request to the Department to receive the flexibility. This request form and other pertinent documents are available on the Department's Web site at: http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility.

Electronic Submission: The Department strongly prefers to receive an SEA's request for the flexibility electronically. The SEA should submit it to the following address: ESEAflexibility@ed.gov.

Paper Submission: In the alternative, an SEA may submit the original and two copies of its request for the flexibility to the following address:

Patricia McKee, Acting Director
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3W320
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Due to potential delays in processing mail sent through the U.S. Postal Service, SEAs are encouraged to use alternate carriers for paper submissions.

REQUEST SUBMISSION DEADLINE

SEAs have multiple opportunities to submit requests for the flexibility. The submission dates are November 14, 2011, February 28, 2012, and an additional opportunity following the conclusion of the 2011–2012 school year.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MEETING FOR SEAS

The Department has conducted a number of webinars to assist SEAs in preparing their requests and to respond to questions. Please visit the Department's Web site at: http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility for copies of previously conducted webinars and information on upcoming webinars.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions, please contact the Department by e-mail at ESEAflexibility@ed.gov.

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For each attachment included in the *ESEA Flexibility Request*, label the attachment with the corresponding number from the list of attachments below and indicate the page number where the attachment is located. If an attachment is not applicable to the SEA's request, indicate "N/A" instead of a page number. Reference relevant attachments in the narrative portions of the request.

LABEL	LIST OF ATTACHMENTS	PAGE
1	Notice to LEAs	A1
2	Comments on request received from LEAs (if applicable)	A2
3	Notice and information provided to the public regarding the request	A3
4	Evidence that the State has formally adopted college- and career-ready content standards consistent with the State's standards adoption process	A4
5	Memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs) certifying that meeting the State's standards corresponds to being college- and career-ready without the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level (if applicable)	N/A
6	State's Race to the Top Assessment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (if applicable)	A6
7	Evidence that the SEA has submitted high-quality assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review, or a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review (if applicable)	N/A
8	A copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups (if applicable)	A8
9	Table 2: Reward, Priority, and Focus Schools	133
10	A copy of the guidelines that the SEA has developed and adopted for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems (if applicable)	A10
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COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Legal Name of Requester:	Requester's Mailing Address:
Nevada Department of Education	700 East Fifth Street Carson City, NV 89701

State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request

Name: Diane Mugford

Position and Office: Education Programs Professional, Office of Assessment, Data and Accountability Management

Contact's Mailing Address:
700 East Fifth Street Suite 108
Carson City, NV 89701

Telephone: 775-687-9183

Fax: 775-687-9118

Email address:dmugford@doe.nv.gov

Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Dale A.E. Erquiaga	Telephone: 775-687-9217
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X____ Dale A.E. Erquiaga _____	Date: October 27, 2014

The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility.

WAIVERS

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

☒ 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.

☒ 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.

☒ 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.

☒ 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.

☒ 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.

☒ 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or

restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State's priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State's reward schools that meet the definition of "reward schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.

☒ 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.

☒ 10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State's priority schools that meet the definition of "priority schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

☐ 11. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

☒ 12. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA's State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all

subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools that are not reward schools, priority schools, or focus schools.

☒ 13. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not rank sufficiently high to be served.

ASSURANCES

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that:

☒ 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.

☒ 2. It will adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)

☒ 3. It will develop and administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)

☒ 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)

☒ 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)

☒ 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)

☒ 7. It will report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)

☒ 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, all teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later than the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)

☒ 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)

☒ 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.

☒ 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (Attachment 2).

☒ 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (Attachment 3).

☒ 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.

☒ 14. It will report annually on its State report card, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the "all students" group and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State's annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. It will also annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively.

If the SEA selects Option A in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all the guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:

☒ 15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. (Principle 3)

CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State's Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.

Nevada is a geographically large state, yet has a small number of residents, serving just under 440,000 students in PreK-12 public education, and with fewer than 23,000 teachers statewide. This dynamic supports communication and collaboration across the state in ways that are easier than in densely populated states. As is the tradition in Nevada, stakeholders were approached early and meaningfully to be a part of the development of our next generation accountability system. Accordingly, engagement and input from Nevada teachers was sought through several targeted efforts. A statewide survey was sent to Nevada's 17 school districts as well as the 15 state-sponsored charter schools, encouraging all teachers to provide input on specific considerations for each of the three principles of the state's Waiver Application. The President of the Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) assisted in designing the survey questions. Of the 1657 respondents, 49% were teachers. Additional survey efforts, described in detail in Question 2, were undertaken in Clark County School District, which provides education to 71% of the State's students. Teachers were also encouraged to provide input in writing or via phone to a designated representative at the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), however no additional input was received through this mechanism. Interestingly, responses from teachers who responded to the statewide survey largely mirrored feedback from other stakeholders, as described below in Question 2. Among other considerations, there was consistent agreement in both the types of indicators and measures that should be used to evaluate and classify school and educator performance.

Meetings were held with representatives of the NSEA as well as local association leaders. These face-to-face meetings afforded opportunities for association leaders to receive information about proposed accountability redesign concepts, to share concerns and hopes, and to provide targeted input and feedback on Nevada's Waiver Application. A set of materials including talking points and PowerPoint presentations were prepared and shared with Association leaders to support meaningful dialogue with their constituents. Surprisingly, NSEA leaders were less concerned about the labels applied to schools than were other stakeholders, as described in question 2, below. Teacher leaders were concerned about making sure that all educators receive the necessary ongoing professional development to support acquisition of knowledge and skills to be able to teach the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (later retitled Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS)[1] . In these meetings, the NDE affirmed its commitment to working with the statewide CCSS Steering Committee, described in Principle 1, to continue to roll out the CCSS in ways that afford job-embedded professional development to support teachers and administrators. Because these concepts were also contemplated in the State's approach to Principle 1, no changes to the application were needed in this regard.

[1] Throughout this document, the Nevada Academic Content Standards are synonymous with the Common Core Standards.

It is especially noteworthy that teachers are primary partners in the state's work to develop a comprehensive system of educator evaluation. As a result of State legislation passed in June 2011, a statewide Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) exists. This Council, more fully described in Principle 3, has been created to develop recommendations for the creation and implementation of statewide uniform performance evaluation system. Of the 15-member council, 4 members are teachers who have an active voice in shaping the way that teachers and administrators will be evaluated, as well as how they will be supported through systems that foster continuous improvement. As part of the waiver development process, the TLC received presentations on the application requirements and proposed concepts to address the criteria under Principles 1 and 2. It was relayed that the work of the TLC is the foundation for Principle 3, and that teachers will directly impact the development of the educator evaluation system described within this application. The TLC made suggested revisions to the values statements, which were changed in response to their feedback, as well as strongly recommended that there be alignment in the ways that educators and schools are evaluated, classified, supported and rewarded. Based on the input of the TLC as well as association leaders, the State refined the working Theory of Action upon which the proposal is built, specifically addressing the concept of alignment across PreK-12 standards, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, personnel evaluation, and professional development.

Finally, draft copies of the Application were sent to NSEA leaders in advance of submission so that they could provide focused feedback on the concepts and the content of the state's proposed system.

As noted above, changes were made to the values statements and the theory of action in response to recommendations from stakeholders, including teachers. The original values were retained, while additional considerations were incorporated. The specific ways in which the values were modified are described here, wherein those items in italics reflect the recommended changes that were made.

Accordingly, stakeholders agreed the system must be:

- Feasible
- Defensible
- Credible
- Transparent *(in results and in observations of practice)*
- Parsimonious → *useful*
- Fair
- *Accurate (at the micro and macro levels)*
- *Aligned*

And that the system must be designed such that it:

- Is coherent, with the various elements of the system aligned to ensure interdependent functionality
- Supports the delivery of effective instruction
- Narrows the achievement gap and values both academics and affect
- Relies on multiple measures including growth, status, and perhaps additional measures
- Indicates students' readiness for college and careers, understanding that this is broader than

merely an analysis of performance on the common core state standards

- Ensures transition from current parameters to future expectations in a staged sequence
- Provides differentiated supports and consequences in response to data-driven decision-making, following a "loose-tight" paradigm for empowerment and management of school performance
- Demands consistent implementation of policies and procedures to ensure fairness
- *Build engagement on the part of all people in the system*
- *Provides actionable, meaningful feedback*
- *Builds and reinforces collaboration*
- *Ensures from a systems approach that the change reaches the classroom – that we're clear about expectations of teachers/administrators and get them invested in implementation*

These values then drove the creation of a robust theory of action. A number of different iterations were tested with Nevada stakeholders, to include the following possible theory of action statements:

- Nevada's integrated and comprehensive PreK-12 accountability system will be aligned to classify performance, reward success, and leverage supports and resources in order to ensure that all students exit high school, college and career ready.
- Nevada's integrated and comprehensive accountability system will classify performance, reward success, and leverage supports and resources in order to engage educators and students in continuous improvement.
- When teachers are supported with an aligned system of standards, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and professional learning, then they build capacity to meet student daily learning targets, back-mapped from student standards, including defined college and career readiness outcomes.
- Nevada's integrated and comprehensive accountability system provides teachers and administrators with an aligned system of standards, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and professional learning that builds capacity to meet daily learning targets, to ensure that students are college and career ready, that will classify performance, reward success, and leverage supports and resources to engage educators and students in continuous learning.
- Educators operate in a Nevada system that provides them with the opportunity, capacity, responsibility, and authority to meet the learning needs of all students so that they are all prepared to meet clear standards of performance in ways that ensure each one exits ready for success in college or career.

After due consideration by district representatives including teachers and school and district administrators, as well as parents, school board members, and business representatives, the following theory was established, and is the foundation upon which this application for ESEA flexibility is sought:

- The purpose of public education in Nevada is to meet the learning needs of all students in order to prepare them to be college and career ready. This purpose is supported by an integrated and comprehensive accountability system, which has two essential aims – to ensure educators meet professional responsibilities and to support capacity building. The system achieves this goal by aligning PreK-12 standards, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, personnel evaluation, and professional development.

2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

Nevada engaged stakeholders through a comprehensive approach that included a number of strategies to seek input and shape the creation of a next generation accountability system that fosters college and career readiness for all students in the State. These strategies included: the creation of an Accountability System Redesign Committee and sub-set called the Core Group, numerous presentations to critical stakeholder groups, individual meetings with leaders of various state and local organizations, a statewide survey, the opportunity to email or phone a designated SEA contact, electronic feedback loops, press releases to statewide media outlets, and distribution of draft copies of the Waiver Application. Each of these efforts is described in more detail below.

The State's first undertaking was to create an Accountability System Redesign Committee and as a subset of that entity, a Core Group. The Accountability Redesign Committee is comprised of 40 stakeholders representing a broad-based constituency. The Committee members have a breadth of expertise and experience in designing and implementing accountability systems and in providing and influencing education for PreK-12 students in Nevada. Members of the Committee represent 16 of Nevada's 17 school districts, as well as the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), and the Nevada System of Higher Education. They have skills and experience in issues associated with college and career readiness including Common Core and other State standards; accountability and assessment design and implementation; curriculum and instruction, school, district, and State improvement, and pedagogy for diverse learners including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. A 16-person sub-set of the Committee was created to serve as a "think tank" to create ideas and generate work in response to directions from a broad array of individuals, which included NDE, school district, and SPCSA personnel. The whole Committee formally met three times and engaged in email and phone interchange across the period from October 2011 through February 2012. The Core Group met 2-4 times per month beginning in November 2011 and concluding in February 2012. From these entities, a set of foundational values was created, which was shared with numerous existing stakeholder groups who were consulted as part of the state's development process. Each of these groups and the specific feedback they provided are described below, including input and refinement to the values statements. Additional input from the entities articulated below brought refinement to the values and also generated the Theory of Action, which drove the concepts upon which Nevada's new accountability system is built.

Each of Nevada's 17 district superintendents belongs to the long-standing Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS). This group meets face-to-face every month to discuss and enhance their learning on pertinent issues in public education, and to engage in collaborative problem solving and resource sharing. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Deputy Superintendent for Instructional, Research, and Evaluative Services also participate in these monthly meetings. NASS is a significant stakeholder group relative to the development and implementation of a new accountability system. Accordingly, in the months of November 2011-February 2012, a preponderance of time during each of their monthly meetings was dedicated to interactive dialogue about the redesign of a statewide accountability system and about capacity to implement a new system. Perspectives were shared regarding school and educator classifications,

supports, and consequences, all of which shaped the State's application. In particular, the perspectives of this group deeply impacted the creation of the School Performance Framework that is described in Principle 2. A number of scenarios were considered with regard to the relative weightings for measuring student achievement including indicators for growth, status (i.e., proficiency), gaps in subpopulation performance, and other indicators. NASS was a critical stakeholder group in making recommendations to the state regarding the various weights that each of these indicators should bear in order to rank and classify school performance.

Political leaders in Nevada have also actively been consulted to shape the application. Governor Brian Sandoval was engaged in the development of the application both through senior staff liaisonship to the NDE as well as through a face-to-face meeting held with the Governor and Dr. Keith Rheault, who was at that time State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Members of the Governor's Office staff were in attendance at monthly NASS meetings and met with NDE leaders intermittently to discuss application content and progress. Gubernatorial engagement is particularly relevant in Nevada, as the state is undergoing a paradigm shift in the way the state superintendent comes to the position. Upon Dr. Rheault's retirement in April 2012, for the first time in Nevada's history, the State Superintendent was appointed by the Governor. Dr. James W. Guthrie accepted this distinguished position. Also new is that Dr. Guthrie, in his capacity as Superintendent, is a member of the Governor's Cabinet. This relationship is yielding a greater deal of partnership from other state agencies such as the Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation, which are proving useful as the NDE furthers efforts to refine cross-agency data systems, as one example. Governor Sandoval is a tremendous supporter of education and has a particular interest in the success of students who are English Language Learners, targeting expertise in this area as well as other equity issues, within the recruitment efforts for the next state superintendent. The Governor has been most interested in the labels to be applied to schools within Nevada's School Performance Framework, and the application has been modified to classify schools along a five-start continuum in accordance with his preferences. This preference also matches that commented upon by the Legislative Committee on Education, who received a formal presentation about the ESEA waiver during a meeting in January 2012. The Committee, which is bi-partisan, agreed that flexibility is needed, and approved the direction the State Department of Education is pursuing. Also relevant is the fact that the configuration of the State Board of Education (SBE) has been modified, such that in January 2013, the SBE will include a combination of elected and appointed members, whereas membership has historically been elected singly by the populace. The current State Board has been apprised of the NDE's application development efforts through formal presentations during Board meetings every other month starting in October 2011. No recommendations were made by the Board to revise the application contents or concepts.

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) — a group of stakeholders dedicated to advocating for students with disabilities and comprised of a majority of parents of special education students and people with disabilities — engaged in conversations about the State's proposed waiver application in both November 2011 and January 2012. The SEAC is chaired by the Executive Director of Nevada PEP – the State Parent Training and Information Center for parents of students with disabilities, vice chaired by a representative from higher education, and among others, includes membership by the Nevada Disability and Advocacy Law Center- the state's Office of Protection and Advocacy. SEAC responded favorably to the state's intention to lower the minimum "n" size from 25 to 10 for sub-population accountability, and expressed appreciation that Nevada is committed to a sustained focus on the performance of students with disabilities. SEAC

restated previously voiced concerns about how to ensure that students with disabilities master the Common Core State Standards, which resulted in robust conversations about the need for enhanced professional development for teachers who provide services to students with disabilities, both on NVACS content knowledge and on pedagogy. In these meetings, the State affirmed its commitment to working with key entities and organizations to foster professional development and growth so that all personnel have the skills necessary to support effective learner-centered instruction for college and career readiness for all students. This included focusing on those students who are currently performing under grade level expectations, as is the case with many students with disabilities in Nevada. SEAC's concerns mirrored the feedback provided by the Special Education District Administrators' (SEDA) organization, comprised of Nevada's 17 school district special education directors, which engaged in focused conversations about the waiver application over the course of fall 2011. Both groups believe it is necessary to pay particular attention to the inclusion of special education students in core content classrooms. In the aggregate, Nevada has a very high inclusion rate relative to the amount of time special education students spend in regular education classrooms. However, for both special education and English Language Learner (ELL) students, it is critical that they receive instruction from core content experts who have the pedagogical skills to deliver learner-centered instruction that meets individual students' needs to reach mastery of college and career ready standards. Nevada's commitment to fostering these outcomes is described in detail in Principles 1, 2, and 3 in this application. SEAC in particular supported the conceptual approach to supporting schools under a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework, which results in those with data-based needs for supports receiving the targeted interventions they require to succeed. Both SEAC and SEDA concurred with a focus on growth, and requested the state continue to explore opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of NVACS and other standards through non-traditional performance based assessments.

The Special Education Advisory Committee is created such that those members serve as representatives for larger constituent groups. For example, the Chair is the Executive Director for the State Parent Training and Information Center, and as such, takes information back to the parents served through that center, and solicits information from her constituents to bring to the Committee for contemplation. In this way, it is assured that members of SEAC speak with a "systems" voice, wherein issues raised are founded on a set of evidence. The NDE has been careful in the past few years to foster the operationalization of SEAC meetings such that issues raised are grounded on multiple demonstrations of an issue, rather than one-time problems that are not seemingly systemic in nature. Through this orientation, the NDE is able to access information from a subset of individuals that is representative of a much larger whole, when it comes to meeting the needs of students with disabilities in Nevada.

Engagement to increase outcomes for Nevada's English Language Learners (ELL) has focused to a great extent on seeking input regarding the adoption and rollout of the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Standards. The NDE believed at that time, and still does, that adherence to the WIDA standards in the delivery of instruction for ELL students will increase outcomes for this population of learners. Therefore, beginning in the spring of 2011, the NDE initiated conversations with Nevada school districts to explore a statewide move towards the WIDA standards, a concept that was uniformly embraced by stakeholders. Since that time, continued dialogue has occurred along with professional development and technical assistance to develop plans to effectively rollout the WIDA standards across all of Nevada's school districts, as well as with those Nevada charter schools that serve ELL students. Stakeholders agree that adoption and

rollout of the WIDA standards is necessary to increase the rigor of our expectations of ELL students, and is further substantiated by the alignment of WIDA and Common Core State Standards. It is anticipated that through careful planning and implementation, this work will support our statewide efforts to increase the use of academic English in content area classrooms and to foster inclusive education for ELL students that results in meaningful college and career readiness. Additionally, members of the Clark county-and Washoe county- based Latino Chambers of Commerce were engaged through the leadership of those respective school districts to gather input on the principles that are addressed in this application. Key leaders in the Latino community agreed that increasing outcomes for ELL students is a State priority, stressing that students must master the English language as well as academic subjects. They agreed that differentiating instruction to meet the needs of special learners is necessary, and appreciate that the State is committed to shining a spotlight on the needs of ELL students. No suggested changes to the accountability system were made from these ELL representatives. Meeting the needs of ELL students, which in Nevada is primarily related to Latino children and youth, is an issue about which Governor Sandoval has been quite vocal in expressing his concern, and has stated that he expects the education system to support them in achieving at high performance levels. The NDE, with collaborative support from the Governor's Office, will continue to build and expand outreach efforts to foster engagement of families of ELL students, community leaders, and policy makers who are committed to improving results for such students. Such individuals, along with additional persons in similar roles who are advocates for students who have disabilities, who live in poverty, who are Native American, etc., will come together as part of a Nevada education stakeholder advisory group. This group will share stories and insights based on their knowledge of existing successes and challenges across the state and will work to advise NDE leadership in improving results for all students, and especially for our diverse student populations. The advisory group will meet at least annually for a face-to-face meeting, and via technology or face-to-face on a quarterly basis with senior NDE leadership including the State Superintendent.

To facilitate engagement of multiple parent leaders from across the state, a phone meeting was held with the State PTA President as well state board members of the Nevada Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the State Superintendent. Parent leaders have expressed appreciation for the continued focus on sub-population performance, and were pleased to see a heightened focus on the achievement of college and career readiness for Nevada's students. The group discussed their concerns about Nevada's educational performance — for which the state was assigned an overall rating of C- in the recent Quality Counts 2012 report — stating that Nevada's economy will only improve if our educational system improves. They agreed with the orientation proposed by the state to provide more autonomy to those schools with demonstrated success and more management for those schools identified as under-performing. The group shared their perspective that parent involvement and family engagement must be expected from every school and that it must be a priority for educators. Principle 3 speaks to this element, with Nevada's performance evaluation system to require an analysis of teachers' and administrators' use of family engagement strategies and these data to be factored into educators' performance ratings. PTA representatives did not care for an approach to letter grades for school labels, yet believed that the labels should be useful and simple to understand. The State PTA leader has drafted and submitted a letter of support for the application.

Feedback from leaders of the Nevada State Education Association was also solicited through a face-to-face meeting. Because the State is already undertaking significant reform initiatives with regard

to teacher and administrator evaluation — with active involvement of teachers — union leaders did not have a tremendous amount of additional feedback to share with regard to the waiver application. They reiterated the need for educator evaluation systems to rely upon the use of multiple measures, all of which must be valid and reliable, in order to well inform human capital decisions. As described in Principle 3, these are mandated underpinnings of Nevada's future system, and there is implicit understanding of the need to approach this work in ways that are especially thoughtful with regard to implications for implementation. There was agreement with the State's proposed orientation that resources should be targeted where the data warrant a need for more intensive intervention, and that rich, job-embedded professional development is the most important factor for increasing educator capacity to provide learner-centered instruction that support student growth and proficiency. Caution was expressed about using school labels that might reinforce negative values or replicate the ineffective features of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). An accountability system where capacity-building is a driver identifies specific needs and aligns effective supports to those needs. The NSEA expressed interest in school identification that better inspires building capacity. Moving to the future, in addition to continued engagement with NSEA, the NDE will work more deeply with local teachers associations, as well as with school districts to share information with teachers through email networks, so as to ensure that teachers who are not associated with unions are engaged as well. Efforts will include information dissemination as well as online surveys to provide opportunities for feedback in order to gather data that helps shape decision-making about system improvement over time. NDE-sponsored events such as the statewide Mega Conference will also offer opportunities for teachers (and others) to learn of new developments and provide input regarding system reform.

Nevada is fortunate in that more than a decade ago, the Legislature recognized the need for targeted attention on the state's Native American students. At that time, and since then, a designated education programs professional has existed at the NDE, focused on fostering results for Native American students. One of the communication tools that exists is a statewide listserv for individuals interested promoting educational success for Native American students. This listserv is a frequently used and well-respected tool in Nevada for communicating with tribal leaders and other advocates for Native students. Leaders from a diverse array of Nevada's 21 tribes are members of the listserv. Messages are posted on the listserv several times per week, not only as a way to share information but to facilitate dialogue. Because of Nevada's geography, in which many Native students and Native leaders and advocates live in rural and remote locations, the use of such technology has been particularly useful for stimulating dialogue. Information about the waiver was sent across this listserv and tribal leaders were encouraged to provide feedback to shape the state's accountability system through responses via email or phone, as well as feedback on the draft application. No feedback was received through the listserv, however, comments were shared through the NDE's Indian Education Program Professional, in support of building a system that makes sure to pay attention to reporting on the needs of native students, even when they constitute only a small percentage of a given school's enrollment. There is a tight community of individuals who are dedicated to Native students' education issues, and through such partnerships, for each of the past 5 years, an annual Indian Education Summit has been coordinated and hosted by the NDE in partnership with tribal leaders, school districts and the Center for Student Cultural Diversity at the University of Nevada, Reno. The NDE will continue to use the listserv as a communication tool, will continue to support the NDE Indian Education professional in meeting with stakeholders from across the state in one-on-one and small and large group settings (to include data sharing on Native performance), and will ensure that the Nevada School Performance Framework is a subject

of presentation and discussion at future Indian Education Summits.

The State also reached out to leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Las Vegas to solicit feedback on Nevada's proposed system. Email exchanges as well as a draft copy of the application were shared in advance of final submission to attain input on the application.

The Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB) provided focused feedback during an interactive dialogue session in January 2012. Conversations with this group centered largely on policy implications, including issues associated with transitioning to the Common Core State Standards and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), working with district leaders to empower reward schools and support focus and priority schools, while also increasing outcomes across all schools, and staying close to the work of the Teachers and Leaders Council as that group prepared recommendations for a statewide uniform performance evaluation system for teachers and administrators. NASB was especially concerned with the classification of schools, voicing a unified opinion that the labels applied to schools matter, and that there are tremendous morale implications for schools in response to the label they are given, especially when the labels are negative in nature. This feedback, which was the same as that voiced by all other stakeholder groups, shaped the state's decision to label schools using a framework that rests on "Levels".

As mentioned in Question 1 (above), a 15-member Nevada Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) exists to formulate recommendations for the creation and implementation of a statewide uniform performance evaluation system. It is worth noting that members of the TLC include teachers, administrators, higher education representatives, businessmen, school board members, and a designated parent representative. As evidenced in the selection of the committee and in their dialogue in public meetings, different members have a focused skill set in working with diverse learners, including students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students living in poverty, accompanied by a demonstrated passion for improving results for all Nevada students. When presented with information about the state's ESEA Waiver Application in December, the TLC responded strongly that the ways in which educators are evaluated and classified should align with the methodology for school identification. The TLC opined that it would not make sense for a system to exist in which a school was identified as failing while simultaneously rating the majority of the school's administrators and teachers as highly effective. Accordingly, the values statements driving the development of the system were modified to address this consideration, and the theory of action was refined to address cross-system alignment.

With a particular focus on implementation considerations, the Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA) was also consulted as part of the State's process for creating a new accountability system. Comprised of district and school level leaders, NASA members were especially interested in sharing feedback with regard to the rollout of the NVACS, and implications for student subpopulations to receive effective, learner-centered instruction and be able to demonstrate mastery through the SBAC assessments. The group spoke to the importance of timely and relevant data to support decision making, and agreed that an RTI-centered approach to school support makes sense. Feedback from this group, as well as NASS and the Core Group resulted in the State deciding not to label school districts, but to keep the labels as well as the focus, squarely centered on diagnostic analysis, improvement planning, and implementation at the school level, with district leveraged support as a principal mechanism for these activities. That said, consensus was

reached with regard to the need for district leaders to assume responsibility for helping to increase outcomes for students at all schools, and especially at those schools with demonstrated under-performance. This group, along with NASS, was also in support of the need to differentiate classifications for alternative schools such as those that exclusively serve students with significant disabilities or are associated with correctional institutions.

The Title I Committee of Practitioners (COP) also met to discuss Nevada's proposed next generation accountability system. This committee - comprised of teachers, administrators, parents, community and business representatives and private school educators - expressed agreement that the conditions that currently exist mandating Supplemental Educational Services and School Choice are not an effective use of funds. District leaders agreed with this perspective. Accordingly, the State's Waiver Application requests flexibility to stop mandating the set aside of funds for this purpose. The COP also provided input regarding the notion of "rank and serve" for Title I schools, voicing their perspective that the State should seek conditional flexibility on current requirements.

Much of the basis for the School Performance Framework and the cascading system of autonomy and managed performance, which are described in Principle 2, and which are cornerstones for the new accountability system, was driven by the work of Clark County School District (CCSD) and Washoe County School District (WCSD), which collectively serve approximately 85% of Nevada public school students. CCSD engaged in targeted outreach efforts with regard to the School Performance Framework, surveying and/or meeting with more than 5000 stakeholders for their perspectives on this new way to diagnose and classify school performance. Target audiences for these endeavors included the Latino and Asian Chambers of Commerce, the Paiute Tribe Education Committee, the Clark County Black Caucus, School Board Trustees as well as District Parent Advisory Groups, the Board of Trustees, and district principals and teachers. Responses to these local outreach efforts helped to drive decision making about school indicators and weighting distributions for school classification.

WCSD also undertook significant efforts to engage community feedback, and much of the work of that district helped to inform the state application with regard to the comprehensive system of school supports and rewards, as built around the concept of Managed Performance Empowerment (MPE) described in Principle 2. In January 2011, WCSD took the lead on MPE and created the first reform policy in the State centered on principles of accountability and with the full support of their Board of Trustees. Almost 3000 stakeholders were consulted in the development of the District's *Envision WCSD 2015*, which articulates the Managed Performance Empowerment Action Plan for Reform. These outreach efforts included Town Hall events as well as targeted meetings with parents, educators, Education Alliance, Reno/Sparks Chamber, local representatives of the NAACP, Latino organizations, local institutions of higher education, State and local political leaders, P16 Council members, Reno Sparks Indian Colony and Native American representatives, and local business leaders.

A statewide ESEA Waiver Survey was created in consultation with leadership from the Nevada State Education Association and Nevada school districts, and was made available online through partnership efforts by Washoe County School District. The survey link was sent to leaders of the various entities described in this section for them to disseminate to their constituents. The survey contained two questions about respondent demographics and eight substantive questions to help shape the design of the Nevada's next generation accountability system. Responses were received

from stakeholders representing 12 of Nevada's 17 school districts as well as state-sponsored charter schools not affiliated with local school districts. Significant responses included the following:

- When ranking schools, growth matters most (64%) with proficiency the next highest (20%)
- School success should be measured by more than test scores (89%), and should include considerations such as:
    - Classroom Observations (60%)
    - Attendance (55%)
    - Graduation rates (50%)
    - Administrator Observations (40%)
    - Parent Surveys (53%)
    - Staff Surveys (43%)
    - Student Surveys (37%)

Finally, drafts of the application itself were disseminated to all of the above-mentioned stakeholder groups. A stakeholder input form accompanied the application in order to provide interested stakeholders with an easy mechanism to respond, and stakeholders were also invited to share feedback about the proposal in other ways that were convenient for them, including email exchange, submission of marked up copies of the application, and/or phone engagement with NDE staff. Ongoing dialogue and collaboration in the implementation of the new system will be equally critical to the efforts undertaken for creation of this proposal seeking permission to adopt and apply this system.

The NDE is working to design a stakeholder outreach strategy to increase capacity to share information with and to solicit input from key partners. Now that the NDE's State Superintendent of Public Instruction is a position appointed by the Governor and the Superintendent is a member of the Governor's Executive Cabinet, access to technical assistance for information sharing and collaboration is available from experts in public relations and outreach. Also noteworthy is that the NDE has worked with the Governor's Office to seek input from an array of national experts that will help guide the work of the Department, both in terms of vision and implementation, and which includes individuals in the design and delivery of education for PreK-12 students, including diverse learners such as those with disabilities and/or English language learning needs. In dialogue with these individuals, it has been reaffirmed that Nevada must and will pay attention to ensuring that this next generation accountability grows over time and that the state purposefully implements the foundational values of capacity building and systems improvement built upon continuous feedback loops. Accordingly, data will be collected and analyzed in order to inform systems implementation and decision-making about how to improve the system over time, refining various elements and creating system enhancements as appropriate. This continuous feedback and correction will take into account technical research findings and practical improvements in testing and statistical estimation that occur as more research is undertaken in this complicated field student performance appraisal, teacher effectiveness measurement, and accountability.

Also relevant is that state's implementation of the Nevada School Performance Framework, as described in principle 2, will be a much clearer system of school accountability for community members to understand. The use of NDE and LEA websites to share information will enhance the delivery of information to essential partners such as parents, educators, policymakers, and businesspeople as they strive to understand how the state's children and youth are performing. Existing networks such as the Indian Education Listserv described above, as well as an outreach

strategy of partnership with the Latino Chambers of Commerce, will be used to post information guiding stakeholders to the website, and to solicit feedback and questions as the new accountability system is operationalized. Finally, as mentioned above, an education advisory group, populated with a diverse array of individuals from across the state who bring divergent knowledge and insight regarding educational issues, needs, and strengths relative to all of Nevada's children and youth will come together at least one time per year for a face-to-face meeting, and via technology or face-to-face on a quarterly basis to share their perspectives with senior leadership at the NDE.

EVALUATION

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

☒ Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

OVERVIEW OF SEA'S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:

1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and

2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

Nevada has developed a comprehensive approach to accountability, driven by values established by statewide stakeholders and built from a robust theory of action. Underlying values include credibility, defensibility, fairness, accuracy, feasibility, and transparency. Accordingly, Nevada's next generation accountability system is:

- coherent, with systems alignment to ensure interdependent functionality
- actionable, providing feedback to support effective instruction
- focused on narrowing achievement gaps
- built with growth as a priority measure
- supportive of college- and career- readiness
- differentiated for school supports and rewards following a "loose-tight" paradigm for empowerment and management of school performance

- purposeful in engaging and reinforcing stakeholders in system design and implementation

These values are manifest in an excerpt from Nevada's theory of action:

> The purpose of public education in Nevada is to meet the learning needs of all students in order to prepare them to be college- and career-ready. This purpose is supported by an integrated and comprehensive accountability system, which has two essential aims: to ensure educators meet professional responsibilities and to support capacity building. The system achieves this goal by aligning PreK-12 standards, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, personnel evaluation, and professional development.

To ensure Nevadans graduate high school college- and career-ready, the State has adopted Common Core State Standards (NVACS) and is a governing state in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). College readiness is defined in State regulations; additional work progresses to define career readiness. Significant advancement has been made to support rollout of NVACS and SBAC, in partnership with key entities, including districts, higher education, and the Regional Professional Development Programs, a statewide infrastructure for high quality training. Explicit attention is focused on meeting the needs of students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), including engagement in the National Center and State Collaborative GSEG Grant to address needs of students with significant disabilities, and active work to adopt and rollout the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) for ELL students.

In keeping with stakeholder values, Nevada's School Performance Framework (NSPF) has been created to diagnose school performance and leverage targeted interventions that yield increased student achievement. The NSPF is built upon analyses of schools' results from multiple measures, conceived through a weighted formula of 40% Nevada Growth Model, 30% Proficiency, 20% Subpopulation Gaps, and 10% Other Indicators. These measures are undergirded by a point-based system, assigning school classifications of 5-Star, 4-Star, 3-Star, 2-Star, or 1-Star. Especially noteworthy is attention focused on subpopulations by shrinking existing N sizes of 25, down to 10. Differentiated school supports occur within a framework of Managed Performance Empowerment: rewarding high performance with autonomy; tightly managing underperformance through focused support.

Finally, Nevada recognizes that effective educators are the cornerstone for success. Every classroom deserves an outstanding teacher; every school an exceptional administrator. Statewide performance evaluation system guidelines exist in State statute. The 15-member Teachers and Leaders Council is diversely configured, and will shape the statewide evaluation model, mandating at least 50% student achievement data inform educators' evaluations, the results of which will grow educator expertise though dynamic and aligned systems of preparation, licensure, and ongoing professional growth and enrichment.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

1.A ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	**Option B**
☒ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards. i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)	☐ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards. • Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4) • Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)

1.B TRANSITION TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Provide the SEA's plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

Nevada stakeholders have agreed that the purpose of public education in Nevada is to meet the learning needs of all students in order to prepare them to graduate and to be successful in post-secondary environments. This purpose statement derives from a comprehensive set of values about the ways in which we foster student success, including key considerations for the adoption and implementation of college and career ready standards. Nevada is facing unprecedented

economic challenges, which has significantly heightened attention on the need to develop a more diversified economy. A recent report[2] commissioned by the Governor's Economic Development Committee cites "substantial workforce skills shortfalls" as one of Nevada's key challenges in moving towards a stable economy, in which we are less focused on short-term consumption and instead focused on attracting diverse and innovative economic sectors to help grow our economic opportunities.

Increased Systemic Alignment of Professional Learning Activities for College-and Career Ready Standards

Nevada is ensuring implementation of College- and Career-Ready Standards in 2013-2014 by increasing the Department's role in aligning the work of the Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) to the implementation of the Standards. Under recent Nevada legislation the Superintendent for Public Instruction now heads the Statewide Coordinating Council, which decides on approval of the RPDPs' five-year plans and budgets. (Senate Bill 447 finalized June 1, 2013 http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/77th2013/Reports/history.cfm?ID=1013)

In the past, the Statewide Council was made up of the directors of the three RPDPs. The Statewide Council has been reconstituted to provide more systemic oversight of the RPDPs and to include more diverse stakeholder representatives. Under the guidance of the State Superintendent and the Statewide Council, the work of the RPDPs will be more consistent across the State, with common plans to support educators' specific needs for increased knowledge of the Nevada Academic Content Standards, and to provide professional learning to improve pedagogy for the more complex and rigorous standards and assessments.

The tool for gathering information on the effectiveness of RPDP supports will be enhanced to permit better data collection on implementation of the professional learning strategies at interims of 30 days and 90 days after the trainings provided by the RPDPs, with a specific focus on teachers of ELL students and teachers of students with disabilities. Data gathered will be evaluated and presented in the annual report submitted to the State Superintendent and the Statewide Council on the effectiveness of the RPDPs trainings in supporting implementation of instruction for the Nevada Academic Content Standards. Based on the report, the Statewide Council will provide specific feedback to RPDPs, and the Council will provide guidance to improvement planning for the RPDPs' following-year activities.

The NDE triangulates information to understand the level of implementation of professional learning activities in districts. A request from the State Superintendent was recently sent to the boards of trustees and superintendents of Local Educational Agencies under the authority of the State Board of Trustees. The information gathered through an accompanying rubric will aid in ensuring the alignment of curriculum and instruction with the new standards. The rubric is being used to collect information on the degree of implementation of the standards. The information will be used to inform the direction for the RPDPs to ensure the level of implementation of the Nevada Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts and mathematics will be increased.

The due date for the return of this information from all LEAs to the Superintendent is mid-June

[2] *Unify, Regionalize, Diversify: An Economic Development Agenda for Nevada*. Retrieved November 11, 2011 from http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/papers/2011/1114_nevada_economy/1114_nevada_economy.pdf

2014. The information collected will result in a report to the State Board of Trustees on July 10, 2014.

To provide further understanding of alignment of RPDP activities to needs of educators, NDE has contracted with the Public Education Foundation of Las Vegas to create a gap analysis based on interviews of both teachers and administrators in the field.

The latter three activities will provide the NDE with a baseline understanding of the present state of standards implementation in Nevada, and the information gathered will inform the Statewide Coordinating Council's direction for the RPDPs on the future professional learning activities in 2014-2015.

In addition, the NDE is engaged in a partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) relative to the implementation of the Nevada Academic Content Standards. The work will result in a "road map" for further implementation of the standards and for continued support of Nevada educators.

In order to provide the researchers, managers, entrepreneurs, and skilled workers that will allow the State to develop industrial sectors for an innovation-based economy, Nevada needs to refine and enhance educational systems throughout PreK-12 schools, community colleges, and four-year universities. This work begins with a common vision for college and career readiness and an appreciation of the need to purposefully align systems to promote desired outcomes. Adopting and implementing the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) clearly communicates the State's expectations for school, district, and state performance. The NVACS provide the foundation for curriculum design, instructional practice, and formative, interim, and summative assessments at the state and local levels. Nevada's adoption of the NVACS and engagement in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), as well as the State's efforts to purposefully transition to and scale up instruction towards, and assess student mastery of, the NVACS move the State toward attainment of college and career readiness for all students. These adoption, rollout, and scale up efforts are described below in detail.

Timeline of Key Activities to Adopt College and Career Readiness Standards

October 2010

The Nevada State Board of Education voted to adopt the NVACS in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. (See Minutes of the Nevada State Board of Education, October 2010, Attachment 4). In the previous summer, the draft NVACS had been endorsed by both the Nevada State Board of Education and the Nevada Council to Establish Academic Standards, a legislatively created body responsible for overseeing the development and adoption of academic standards in Nevada.

2010-2011 Legislative Biennium

The Nevada Legislature created a strong policy foundation for college- and career- readiness for all students by passing Assembly Bill 138, which authorized the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), and the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), to establish clearly defined goals and benchmarks for public high school students to ensure preparation for postsecondary success. Additionally passed was Senate Bill 14 requiring the State Board of Education to develop a model curriculum for ELA and Mathematics for Kindergarten and grades 1 to12.

2009-2010
The College Readiness Taskforce, consisting of Nevada school district leaders, school board members, NDE staff, and faculty from Nevada's community and four year colleges, developed a college-readiness definition and recommended college-readiness standards.

January 2010
The Nevada State Board of Education adopted a college readiness definition and made clear through regulatory adoption, additional expectations such as course offerings, course enrollment and sequencing, and grade point averages for students to be college ready.

March 2011
The Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau created Regulation R041-10 articulating the Board's January adoption. RO41-10 is now in process for codification in the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC).

September 2011
Nevada adopted the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards, which support academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through a focus on high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional development for educators.

December 2011
The NDE convened the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Council. In addition to an overarching purpose to provide strategies and recommendations to improve CTE — especially with respect to its alignment with workforce- and economic-development initiatives — the Council is charged to engage in preliminary thinking about recommendations to define career-readiness, including the relationship of career-readiness to college-readiness, and to provide a tentative direction for measuring career-readiness. The CTE Advisory Council includes representatives from secondary and postsecondary education, employers, the Nevada State Legislature, professional associations, and economic and workforce development agencies, authorities, and organizations.

Nevada has gained knowledge of best practices for developing and implementing CTE standards as a member of the Career Technical Consortium of States (CTECS). Nevada has worked extensively with the Commonwealth of Virginia to review and consider adoption of Virginia's Workplace Readiness system. The system includes expansive definitions, lesson plan guidance, and other instructional support resources for each of the twenty-one CTE Workplace Readiness Standards. The new standards, titled Employability Skills for Career Readiness, are scheduled for State Board of Education adoption this year.

The NDE is taking an increasingly greater role with regard to moving forward the state's efforts on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education. A stakeholder Committee, comprised of representatives from the NDE, NSHE, PreK-12 public education, Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs), and community and business partners is joining forces with other entities in the state that are committed to a progressive STEM agenda. This work will have a deep relationship to supporting efforts to foster college- and career-readiness for Nevada students, as the conceptual ideas being created at this time are put into

practice in the coming months and years. A STEM definition has been created by the Committee and will form the basis for collecting, organizing, and publishing examples of STEM education in Nevada, as well as the development of a STEM implementation plan that will guide be instrumental in guiding the evolving work under this area of focus. The definition is:

> *STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education focuses on active teaching and learning, centered on relevant experiences, problem-solving, and critical thinking processes. STEM education emphasizes the natural interconnectedness of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and their connection to other disciplines, to produce informed citizens that possess and apply the necessary understandings to expand Nevada's STEM-capable workforce in order to compete in a global society.*

Nevada Efforts to Transition to College- and Career-Ready Standards

Concurrent with the preliminary adoption of the CCSS in the summer of 2010, the NDE began the facilitation of the Nevada Coalition for the Transition to the Common Core Standards (NCTCCS). The primary responsibility of the Coalition is to ensure that a common message, understanding and transition plan was available for all school districts. As part of the consortium a Steering Committee was established to guide the work and be the final vetting agency for any work completed and used by those involved with the state transition plan. This broad-based group of educators from across the State represents Nevada school districts and charter schools, the NSHE, Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs), the Nevada State Education Association, and the Standards and Assessment work group from Governor Gibbon's Blue Ribbon Task Force. The Committee's first leadership act was to bring educators together to conduct a comparative analysis of the CCSS with the existing Nevada State Standards. Following the creation of the resulting analysis documents, the NDE engaged support from WestEd to conduct an external validation of the State's conclusions. A copy of the WestEd report is available at Nevada CCSS website https://bighorn.doe.nv.gov/sites/CommonCore/default.aspx.

Results of this analysis have been used to inform the development of the transition plan described in greater detail below, which is designed to support purposeful, staged instruction and assessment of college- and career-readiness.

A second significant effort of the CCSS Implementation Steering Committee was the creation of a Nevada CCSS website, which serves as a tool to disseminate information and to share resource documents and instructional support materials for Nevada's transition to the Common Core standards (Nevada Academic Content Standards). With designated links for teachers, administrators, and parents, the website is widely recognized as a "go to" source for Nevada stakeholders. A scrolling banner at the top of the NDE website has encouraged a broad array of stakeholders to become aware of this resource. The NDE has received materials from the State PTA to assist parents in learning about the changes that exist in the NVACS, to include guides for every grade level in English and Spanish. While one state-developed draft parent brochure has been created, it is also important that the NDE will be working with PTA to make nationally developed materials available on the website and to engage in additional dialogue about how to ensure that the needs of parents are met through the NVACS transition process. Such two-way communication will be essential if we are to graduate students who are truly ready for the global marketplace.

The NCTCCS has also prepared a carefully staged transition plan for implementation of the

NVACS, and provided this resource widely, including targeted dissemination to school and district personnel, as well as RPDP trainers and administrators. By the 2013-2014 school year, all school districts in Nevada will be expected to provide instruction aligned to the NVACS in English Language Arts in grades K-12 and Mathematics in grades K-10. The first year of NVACS instruction in Nevada (2011-2012) included expectations for full instruction of the mathematics NVACS in grades K-2, and targeted implementation in grades 3-8. In order to ensure that high school students will have been introduced to the NVACS prior to their first credit-bearing courses in high school, 9th grade Algebra I and Geometry instruction aligned to the NVACS will be introduced in the 2012-2013 school year. This cohort of students will have been instructed in NVACS-aligned mathematics courses through Algebra II at the completion of the 2013-2014 school year. This is also the first cohort of students that will participate in the 2015 administration of the End-of-Course examinations aligned to the NVACS in high school. Cohorts of students that entered the 9th grade prior to the 2012-2013 school year will not have had adequate scaffolding of NVACS-aligned instruction to ensure that they are sufficiently prepared to be successful in NVACS-aligned courses that may have been introduced to them in grades 10-12. Therefore, the Nevada transition plan excludes courses taken by these students from an expectation of alignment to the NVACS.

This transition plan, which addresses rollout of the NVACS in English Language Arts and Mathematics in grades K-12 is summarized below and is also available at http://www.doe.nv.gov/Curriculum_Standards/

To enhance being a governing state in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC.) the NDE has consultants serving on the Transition to Common Core Work Team, the Test Design Work Team, Hardware Guidelines Work Team, and the Technology Work Team allowing Nevada to be fully aware and involved in the many aspects of the consortium. As development of the summative assessment moves forward SBAC is also working on formative tools that will further align the common core standards to both curriculum and instruction. Nevada has reviewed and voted favorably on the formative tools master plan and shared the structure with the NCTCCS. This will allow professional development in Nevada to parallels with SBAC as well as gaining access to high quality instructional materials, formative tools and interim assessments. The Test Director for Nevada is very involved in the all-State Meetings for SBAC and represents the interest of Nevada through discussions of assessment length, structure, timelines and final decisions. As information and documents are released from SBAC Nevada is in a prime position to gain and disseminate information to the state as a whole. In addition to being a governing state with SBAC, Nevada is also an active member of the Implementing the Common Core Standards (ICCS) SCASS group. Nevada has a diverse team that attends the ICCS SCASS meetings. The team consists of representation from Clark and Washoe Counties, the RPDPs, higher education and NDE staff that represents standards, assessment, and Titles I & III. This involvement allows Nevada to be aware of the movement of SBAC as well as the PARCC Consortium giving Nevada a national view of Common Core and College and Career Readiness.

Table 1.B.1 NVACS Transition Timeline

Nevada's Plan for Transitional Instructional Implementation of the Nevada Academic Content Standards[3]	
2011-2012 English Language Arts • Grades K-8: Full instructional implementation of NVACS • Grades 9-12: Instruction on Nevada standards[4]	**2011-2012 Mathematics** • Grades K-2: Full instructional implementation of NVACS • Grades 3-8: Nevada standards with targeted NVACS standards • Grades 9-12: Nevada Standards
2012-2013 English Language Arts • Grades K-12: Full instructional implementation of NVACS	**2012-2013 Mathematics** • Grades K-2: Full instructional implementation of NVACS • Grades 3-8: Nevada Standards with targeted NVACS • Grade 9: NVACS in Algebra I and Geometry • Grades 10-12: Nevada Standards
2013-2014 English Language Arts • Grades K-12: Full instructional implementation of NVACS	**2013-2014 Mathematics** • Grades K-8: Full instructional implementation of NVACS • Grade 9: NVACS in Algebra I and Geometry • Grade 10: NVACS) in Geometry and Algebra II • Grades 11-12: Nevada Standards
2014-2015 English Language Arts • Grades K-12: Full instructional implementation of NVACS	**2014-2015 Mathematics:** • Grades K-11: Full instructional implementation of NVACS • Grade 12: Nevada Standards

The professional development priorities established by the CCSS Implementation Steering Committee have been summarized into three initial phases of implementation, as described below.

- The first phase of professional development was centered on awareness and the initial dissemination of information related to the CCSS/(NVACS). These efforts occurred during the 2010-2011 school year. With the assistance of the Regional Professional Development

[3] The Common Core State Standards were subsequently renamed the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS).

[4] *Nevada Standards* refers to Nevada State Standards in place before adoption of the Common Core State Standards, not to the current Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS).

Programs (RPDPs) and individual school district offices of professional development, an introductory message from the State Superintendent of Public instruction was made available to all districts with purpose of setting a common goal and timeline for Nevada transition to common core standards. In addition, five power points, with audience in mind, were developed outlining the differences, similarities and expectations of teaching the standards. The five power points focused on elementary mathematics and ELA, secondary mathematics, secondary ELA, administrators, and other core content (social studies and science).

- With the assistance of the NCTCCS as well as the resources on the CCSS (NVACS) website, the second phase of professional development includes the administration of workshops and courses on NVACS implementation. The State's RPDPs, Nevada school districts, and Nevada's two largest universities collaborated to allow participants in these courses to earn graduate credit following successful completion of course objectives. Nevada teachers were invited to attend summer institutes focusing on the implementation of K-2 in ELA and mathematics. These institutes were held regionally and sponsored by the Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (SNRPDP), the North West Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NWRPDP) and the Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NNRPDP). All three RPDPs used common materials that were developed through collaboration with the Nevada Department of Education. All materials from these institutes can be found on the respective websites as well as linked from the NDE NVACS website. The creation of the common materials used for the summer institutes can be found on the NDE website, as well as each of the RPDP websites. In collaboration with the RPDPs and district professional development staff the NDE facilitated various meeting in 2010-11 to complete Phase I of the implementation plan that resulted in the various summer institutes. At the NDE the Assistant Director for the Office of Assessment Program Accountability and Curriculum responsible for standards and curriculum facilitated the coordination of meetings for the different levels of mathematic and ELA work teams. The Secondary and Elementary mathematics and ELA consultants provided feedback and guidance for the development of documents to be used for Phase I. The directors of the SNRPDP, NWRPDP and NNRPDP coordinated the efforts of the developers and trainers for the dissemination of commonly developed materials for the summer Institutes. Curriculum Directors from Douglas County School District, Carson County School District, Clark County School District, Lyon County School District and Humboldt County School District collaborated with each other, the RPDPs and the NDE to ensure that district professional development providers were receiving and promoting a common message aligned to the state transition plan.

  Besides collaborating with the NDE and Nevada school districts to produce the roll-out of the Common Core State Standards (later Nevada Academic Content Standards or NVACS) in all districts in Nevada, the Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program has developed and implemented several professional development sessions and ongoing trainings for principals throughout Nevada. These activities included implementing Profiles of Professional Practice (POPP) seminars for Nevada principals. Phase 7 of the seminars included three modules focusing on training administrators in planning for and facilitating implementation of the Nevada Academic Content Standards. SNRDP Administrative Trainers developed and implemented the Common Core State Standards sessions at the Clark County School District Leadership Department's initial and advanced professional development sessions. The NVACS were

also the foundation for the SNRDP Annual Nevada (Principal) Leadership .

SNRPDP also provided the following to support increased principal capacity to lead schools and teachers in effectively implementing the NVACS:

- Professional Development on implementing the NVACS to over 500 elementary and middle school administrators. The PD training focus was on supervision of instruction aligned to the NVACS;
- Professional development on implementing the NVACS in conjunction with content specialists from SNRPDP to a rural Clark County School District (CCSD) high school;
- Training for high school administrators and staff on implementing the NVACS through a collaborative, site based process for "unwrapping standards" in order to develop appropriate tasks and assessments aligned to the NVACS, and in conjunction with the Clark County Curriculum Engine;
- Monthly professional development on Leading the Implementation of NVACS to all administrators in Lyon, Humboldt, Elko, and Nye County School Districts. Provided the same professional development to administrators in Washoe and Clark County School Districts;
- Curriculum Alignment Self Studies with two Clark County School District elementary schools focusing on assessing the level of rigor in the student work vs. the level of rigor of the NVACS;
- Curriculum Alignment Self Studies with one Lyon County middle school and one Lyon County high school focusing on analyzing student work and activities in a single day in English Language Arts by Common Core alignment by Depth of Knowledge levels to assess the level of rigor in the student work vs. the level of the NVACS.

In addition to the efforts for principals that have been led across the state by the Southern RPDP, the Northwestern RPDP has been working in strong collaboration with Washoe County School District's leaders in Curriculum and Instruction to develop and implement professional development for administrators in their 99 schools. Efforts in the 2011-2012 school year have focused on introductory training whereas the region will move more strongly into deep application in the coming school year.

- With the assistance of the NCTCC, as well as the NVACS and CCSSO websites, the third phase of professional development will be focused on instructional strategies for special populations and focused information dissemination to parents. Materials to support these efforts will be developed in the spring of 2012. Concentrated partnership with experts in special education, ELL, and family engagement will be instrumental in the success of phase three professional development efforts. Summer institutes in the 2012 will enhance the above outlined emphasis. Cross department training within each of the RPDPs and school districts has begun to accommodate the needs of all teachers. Since the adoption of the WIDA Standards multiple workshops have been held for Title III coordinators and attended by RPDP staff to facilitate the understanding of the unique needs associated with second language learners. These experiences have begun to translate into the planning of the 2012

summer institutes. Through the use of Special Education funding and grants, summer workshops focused on special education teacher's awareness and instructional strategies will be offered regionally. Planning of these workshops will involve the NDE content and special education staff, RPDPs and district professional development staff. At the present time Nevada professional development providers are creating and posting common core materials, to ensure access to all teachers' links to these activities will also be posted in the NDE website. Each posting will include a short overview of the activity or document being posted. All materials appearing on the NDE website will be approved and vetted by the Common Core Steering Committee.

Assembly Bill 138 from the 2011 Nevada legislative session authorizes the NDE to work in consultation with the NSHE to develop a plan to establish clearly defined goals and benchmarks for pupils enrolled in public high schools to ensure that those pupils are adequately prepared for the educational requirements of postsecondary education and for success in the workplace. Even prior to the passage of this bill, the NDE had begun collaborating with the NSHE in the dissemination of information about college and career-ready standards as reflected in the Common Core State Standards. As mentioned previously, representatives from NSHE participate in the statewide CCSS Steering Committee. This participation includes representatives from each of the State-supported four-year institutions of higher learning (IHEs) at the dean and director levels.

As a result of this active partnership with higher education, the NDE facilitated a workshop in February 2011 on the future impact of the NVACS on teacher preparation programs for faculty at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), hosted by the College of Education and attended by all Education faculty members. This workshop was also open to faculty from the math and English departments. On an ongoing basis, the state's institutions of higher education (IHEs) are notified of any additional resources added to the state's NVACS website. These resources are regularly used in classes for teacher and leader candidates. The Associate Dean of the College of Education has also recently been added as a member of Nevada's State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) team for the Implementing the Common Core Standards (ICCS) (SCASS) work group.

For the past 18 months, the NDE has been collaborating with NSHE in the dissemination of information about college and career-ready standards as reflected in the Common Core State Standards. Specific examples of this collaboration include the following:

- Representatives from each of the State-supported four-year IHEs have been a part of the Core Curriculum Transition Committee. Participation has been at both the dean and director levels.
- The NDE facilitated a workshop on the impacts of CCSS on teacher preparation programs for faculty at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) hosted by the College of Education and attended by all faculty from Education and open to faculty from math and English (February, 2011).
- The NDE maintains a NVACS web site and notices of updates are sent to the state's IHEs. These resources are regularly used in classes for teacher and leader candidates.
- The Presidents of UNR and Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), as well as the

Superintendent of Washoe County School District (WCSD) meet monthly to discuss issues with regard to ensuring successful transition from high school to college, and alignment of curricula. Outcomes of these meetings include the expanded use of the Accuplacer Exam (the assessment used in higher education to place freshmen in the appropriate level of math or English) as an early measure of readiness for higher education coursework.

- Other outcomes of the ongoing collaboration among NDE, higher education and districts include removing the barriers for dual high school college credits and discussions of accelerated high school-to-college programs. Many of Nevada's high schools are in close proximity to a Nevada university or community college. NRS 389.160 allows the State Board of Education to approval requests from school districts to for high school students to apply specified credits earned through the Nevada System of Higher Education to count toward high school graduation requirements. NDE is currently in the process of improving the communication and transparency of credits that have already been approved, so that parents and students may be encouraged to explore these options.

The task of transitioning educators and students to the Nevada Academic Content Standards will continue to be a significantly collaborative effort, involving educational groups and other stakeholders, such as parents and business over the next several years. Careful planning, implementation, and timely monitoring of achievement results will guide the design and improvement of elements of the system such as programs for educator effectiveness, curriculum and instruction, and differentiated systems of support.

Targeted Efforts for Literacy

Of tremendous value to Nevada's efforts to prepare students to master the NVACS and to graduate college- and career-ready, is the work the State has conducted with regard to literacy instruction. As part of its universal support to all schools, in January 2011, Nevada created and convened a Nevada State Literacy Team (NSLT) comprised of 21 members with expertise at all grade levels and in all aspects of literacy education. Members represent the Office of the Governor, Nevada Department of Education, Nevada System of Higher Education, LEAs, early childhood education, schools, Nevada state agencies, Nevada Regional Professional Development Programs, and statewide literacy consultants and libraries. Funded by a Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant, over a two-month period the NSLT created and published the 2011 Nevada State Literacy Plan (NSLP)[5]. The NSLP sets a comprehensive vision to produce results by providing districts, schools, administrators, teachers, and families with guidelines, recommendations, and expectations for improving literacy in the State of Nevada.

The NSLP builds on current statewide initiatives, especially the adoption of the Nevada Academic Content Standards and involvement in a national consortium of states developing common formative and summative assessments (SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium). The Nevada State Literacy Plan Consists of Six Essential Elements: effective leadership, effective instruction, teacher preparation programs, family and community partnerships, early childhood literacy instruction, and intermediate and adolescent literacy instruction. As one of only six states funded under the Striving Readers Grant, the implementation of this comprehensive initiative at the State and local levels is a significant factor in Nevada's support to schools and districts to

[5] Nevada Department of Education. *Improving Literacy for a Strong Nevada*. 2011. Retrieved February 23, 2012 from https://bighorn.doe.nv.gov/sites/CommonCore/ccss/Striving%20Readers/NSLP%202011%20FINAL.pdf

ensure attainment of college- and career-readiness. Nevada's State Literacy Plan is built around the following six Essential Elements:

1. Effective Leadership – Literacy leaders will work collaboratively to initiate, support, and supervise the improvement of literacy instruction at all levels, including teachers, school administrators, literacy coaches, school librarians, central office administrators, directors of early childhood programs, members of boards of education, university and college faculty, consultants, and NDE personnel. It is essential for all literacy leaders to build capacity within school districts and schools, examine research, align classroom instruction with the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS), and use formative and summative assessments.

2. Effective Instruction – All teachers in Nevada will share the responsibility for student literacy development and must provide effective instruction that is aligned with NVACS. Summative and formative assessment data, ongoing progress monitoring data, and other relevant data are used to inform and monitor decisions related to planning and implementing differentiated instructional strategies at the State, school district, school, classroom, small group, and individual student levels.

3. Teacher Preparation Programs – Nevada institutions of higher education will play a critical role in creating a corps of knowledgeable, qualified, and competent educators. Colleges and universities will prepare teachers and work with literacy leaders to shape policy to improve literacy instruction.

4. Family and Community Partnerships – Literacy leaders recognize that there is a shared interest and responsibility for our students' literacy development and will work together to expand opportunities for children, adolescents, and families. When schools, families, and communities work together, parents become empowered, teachers are more effective, schools improve, and the workforce grows strong.

5. Early Childhood Literacy Instruction – Early childhood literacy leaders will support the emerging literacy development of children from birth through grade 3 by providing instruction that is appropriate for the development of young children and focused on progression through the stages of research-based developmental domains (Child Development Institute, 2010). Coordination of instructional efforts between pre-schools and elementary schools, ongoing monitoring of student progress, and support for families of young children will be provided. This foundational support is critical to students' future success.

6. Intermediate and Adolescent Literacy Instruction – Intermediate and adolescent literacy leaders will support the ongoing literacy development of students in grades 4 through 12; coordinate instructional efforts with elementary, middle, and high schools; monitor student progress; collaborate with content and specialty area teachers; and support families. While many students by grade 4 have learned the necessary skills and strategies to become independent readers and writers, they still need to master advanced literacy practices required for different levels, disciplines, text types, and situations. Students who are still experiencing difficulties need intensive support to develop the skills, strategies, and confidence to meet grade level expectations. Similarly, advanced students require instruction that motivates and challenges them to remain engaged in learning. This intensive support is essential for students to be career and college ready after high school graduation (adapted from National Council of Teachers of English, 2007).

Through multiple systems, innovations, and professional development reform efforts which will be scaled-up using funds from grants such as the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant, Nevada can successfully implement literacy reform on a large scale. School districts funded under this grant will identify underperforming schools, sub-groups, and students in need

of targeted interventions and resources, including students with limited English proficiency and students with special needs. Funded districts will develop needs assessments that include data from literacy inventories and statewide assessments to determine the level of support needed for each school and student, ensuring that all students are impacted, particularly Priority, Focus, and other Title I schools.

Over the next three years, Nevada LEAs will receive support for educational reform through the *Nevada Striving Readers* initiative that will align directly to the NSLP and will include:

- *Curricula and instruction materials* (including those which incorporate technology and early language development) that (a) align to NVACS and Nevada Pre-K Standards, (b) adhere to principles of effective instruction, and (c) incorporate technology with universal design.
- *A coherent computer-based assessment system* that includes: (a) valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring measures that are aligned to NVACS; (b) easy access to and use of data; and (c) accommodations for students with special needs.
- *Job-embedded professional development* provided by implementation specialists/literacy coaches or mentors assigned to each school whose primary duties will be to train and support teachers in (a) implementation of specified curricula and instructional materials with a high degree of fidelity; (b) all of the components of effective literacy instruction; (c) use of specified assessment protocols and resulting data to support instructional decisions; and (d) how to use instructional technology to effect systemic and effective improvement in teaching and learning.
- *Data-Based Decision-Making (DBDM) Literacy Teams* in each school to: (a) support continuous improvement; (b) monitor program implementation and outcomes at the student, classroom, grade, and school levels; and (c) identify professional development needs.
- *Multi-leveled, evidence-based intervention and remediation programs* based on student needs that are informed by continual monitoring of data documented student progress.

Achieving College-and Career-Readiness for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities represent about 11% of Nevada's PreK-12 public education students. In 2009, approximately 21,000 students with Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) in grades 3 through 11 participated in statewide assessments. Historically among the lowest-achieving subgroup of students in the State, special education students will require instruction from teachers who are extremely well prepared to facilitate individual learning that results in mastery of the rigorous NVACS. In Nevada, 65% of students experience 80% or more of their school day in the regular education classroom. Periods of removal for these students often occur during the instruction of the core content with which the students most struggle. This creates a spiraling problem for facilitating students' learning to mastery: students are sent to resource rooms to receive primary instruction from special education teachers, who may have more experience and expertise in differentiating instruction, yet by the nature of their training may have less core content knowledge; Conversely, they do not receive instruction for core content experts, yet if they remained in inclusive classrooms, content-expert teachers may not have the necessary depth of pedagogical capacity.

Addressing these concerns requires multi-faceted approaches. Chiefly, partnerships must be strengthened with institutions of higher education to foster the availability of pre-service preparation programs that graduate teachers who possess requisite competencies in both content

and pedagogy. Some efforts have already been initiated with regard to this need. For example, the College of Education at University of Nevada, Reno, has changed their elementary teacher preparation program so that all students will now graduate with dual certificates in both elementary and special education. Through the collaborative activities described above, the NDE and State IHE's have been working to increase efforts to prepare teachers and administrators through a focus on differentiated instruction. All teacher candidates in Nevada are required to take one or more courses in working effectively with students who have disabilities and/or ELL students. In combination with a clear focus on teaching to the Common Core State Standards, these courses demonstrate that the State-supported IHEs are actively working to better prepare teachers to ensure all students graduate college- and career-ready. Leadership training for principals and other school administrators emphasizes school reform and the importance of instructional and organizational leadership.

Additionally regarding efforts to foster high achievement for special education students, technical assistance must be provided to schools and school districts to help them analyze their approaches to inclusive education for students with disabilities. The NDE has partnered with two school districts to pilot an approach to curriculum audits for special education programs, and this work may be instructive to support larger scale analyses and improvement planning efforts.

Nevada's students with significant cognitive disabilities need increased support to meet the rigorous expectations of the NVACS. To facilitate this outcome, Nevada has joined the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG). The NCSC GSEG is a multi-state project drawing on a ten-year research base. Its long-term goal is to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-secondary options. The NCSC is developing a full system intended to support educators in implementing college- and career-ready standards among students with disabilities. The system will include a summative assessment, curriculum resources and Scripted Lessons aligned to the NVACS, as well as formative assessment tools and strategies, professional development on appropriate interim uses of data for progress monitoring, and management systems to ease the burdens of administration and documentation.

Nevada's membership in the NCSC GSEG also provides professional development opportunities through Nevada's Teacher Community of Practice, for teachers who educate Nevada's students with the most severe cognitive disabilities. Nevada is developing an online Teacher Community of Practice to disseminate information, share lesson plans, address issues of differentiated instruction, promote successful practices, and support access to links for established journals and videos. The site will be open to all Nevada teachers in anticipation of developing collaborative instructional practices for use with students who have disabilities as well as their non-disabled peers. While a small focused core group of teachers are currently official members of the Community of Practice, the NDE has opened up participation for non-members to allow opportunities for all teachers to participate in the webinars and have exposure to the professional development materials (curriculum resources, practice lessons, unwrapped standards, etc.).

English Language Learners and Mastery of NVACS

Nevada has a significant and growing population of Limited English Proficient residents. Despite the current economic downturn, according to the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Nevada is the fastest-growing state in total ELL population. Additionally, MPI reports that Nevada is the third

fastest growing state in terms of ELL students[6]. Nevada's English Language Learner (ELL) students need academic English preparation, and will face increased challenges in meeting the rigorous college- and career-ready Nevada Academic Content Standards. Approximately 80,000 Nevada students, chiefly children who speak Spanish as a first language, will have been tested on the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) by the end of school year 2011-2012. Significant State and district resources, including intense planning efforts have been committed to supporting the transition to college- and career- readiness expectations. A positive element for pre-service preparation is that all teacher preparation programs in Nevada's 4-year institutions require one or more courses for undergraduate majors in teaching English learners.

Nevada recognizes the unique instructional needs of English Language Learners to be guided in the acquisition of Academic English while they are concurrently supported to progress in grade-level content mastery. The key component to a successful English Language Development (ELD) Program is building the capacity of General Education teachers to direct ELD as an intentional component of their content instruction for ELL students. To facilitate the continued effort to grow this capacity, Nevada realized a significant need to update English Language Development standards to integrate with the new NVACS.

Nevada formally adopted the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) ELD standards in the fall of 2011 with the specific intent to provide a framework for districts to guide and support ESL and General Education teachers' instructional practices to include Academic English development for their students. NDE's Title III program embraces an operational definition for Academic English as the language students need to meaningfully engage with academic content within the academic context. (Edynn Sato, WestEd, *Framework for High-Quality ELP Standards and Assessments* - AACC, 2009)

Nevada is committed to providing ELL students rigorous content mastery integrated with Academic English development such that all ELL and former ELL students graduate on time with full preparation for and access to meaningful post-secondary education and employment opportunities. The adoption and implementation of WIDA ELD standards are integral functions of this commitment. Nevada is fortunate that all of the District Title III Directors know each other and collaborate with each other to effectively plan, share resources and support respective ELD Programs. As part of these efforts, in January 2012, the NDE facilitated a WIDA Standards Workshop for district teams consisting of administrators, ESL teachers, classroom teachers, Title III personnel, RPDP trainers, and State Charter School administrators. This was the first step in implementing the rollout plan for WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards.

Once the foundation was laid on the elements necessary for implementation of the WIDA standards with fidelity at the district and school level, the NDE began facilitating the establishment of district timelines for implementation. The following timeline was developed and communicated to the districts and State Charter School administrators:

- (By April, 2012) Collaborate to develop and disseminate training materials with those Districts having appropriate:

[6] Terazzas, Aaron and Michael Fix. *Gambling on the Future*. Migration Policy Institute. 2008. Retrieved February 16, 2012 from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/NCIIP_Nevada.pdf

- Readiness: familiarity with the ELD Standards Framework and a sufficiently developed District-wide ELD Program to incorporate the Standards
- Capacity: sufficient administrative direction to dedicate resources of personnel, time, and physical resources to an integrated, cohesive implementation of WIDA ELD Standards in conjunction with NVACS roll out efforts.

- (By May, 2012) Collaborate with Districts that have established readiness and capacity and who are conducting their own PD for implementation of the WIDA ELD Standards in conjunction with the NVACS:
  - District Leadership Training followed by
  - Site administrator training followed by
  - GenEd and ESL Teacher/personnel training
  - Including expectation for follow-through PD, on-going evaluation of implementation progress, and District and Site level collaboration
- (May, 2012) Review with Title III Districts their general WIDA ELD Standards implementation time-line proposal as part of the Federal Program's Monitoring Process
- (By June, 2012) NDE provided training to districts needing to develop readiness; introduce the WIDA ELD Standards to ESL personnel and key administrators identified by the districts
- (By July, 2012) Determine with districts the Technical Assistance needed by each district to develop Readiness and Capacity
- (By December, 2012) Provide districts with the TA needed to develop their specific plan to phase in meaningful implementation of the Standards as the primary means to accomplish Readiness and Capacity for full district implementation

During 2012-2014, a number of critical considerations that influence placement and exiting of English Language Learners will be revisited and systemic elements redesigned as needed. These include exit criteria, instructional design, assessment accommodations, student-readiness and placement, and evaluation for Learning Disabilities. In 2014 the anticipated New Generation WIDA Consortium assessment will be available. The NDE has been assured that this assessment will be fully aligned with the Nevada Academic Content Standards.

Testing and Instructional Accommodations

Alignment of testing and instructional accommodations for students with disabilities and English Language Learners are critical to support all students in having the opportunity to achieve and demonstrate proficiency of the NVACS. The State has historically participated in studies as well as analyzed existing research to ensure that scores based on accommodated administrations can be meaningfully combined with scores based on non-accommodated administrations. The Nevada Accommodations Advisory Committee, consisting of NDE staff and practitioners who represent district experts in test administration, special education, and ELL, have reviewed existing literature and made recommendations for Nevada-specific studies as appropriate. Additionally, the involvement of NDE staff in the March 2012 Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) State Meeting on Accessibility and Accommodations will help inform Nevada's existing policies and guidelines. Intensive communication and professional development will then support teachers in the use of instructional strategies that are consistent with these guidelines. Most Nevada districts are implementing systems of Response to Intervention (RTI) and the state has also been receiving targeted technical assistance from the National Center for RTI in this school year to enhance and refine a statewide implementation plan for RTI. The work under this

initiative has and will continue to build capacity for educators to make and implement appropriate decisions for instructional accommodations. Part of this decision making process also includes efforts of Individualized Educational Program (IEP) committees, the bodies charged with considering the needs of and making decisions about, instructional accommodations for students with disabilities. Consequently, the NDE will continue to partner with Nevada PEP, the state Parent Training and Information Center to deliver professional development for parents and students to support their meaningful engagement in these processes.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)

Evidence of Nevada's commitment to evaluation of student progress in mastering the NVACS is evident in Nevada's early commitment to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and engagement as a Governing State. As defined in the SBAC Governance Document, each state is required to take an active role in supporting the work of the Consortium, thus Nevada is currently a member of numerous work groups and committees.

The SBAC is one of two multi-state consortia awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education to develop an assessment system based on the new Common Core State Standards (NVACS). To achieve the goal that all students leave high school ready for college and career, SBAC is committed to ensuring that assessment and instruction embodies the CCSS and that all students, regardless of disability, language, or subgroup status, have the opportunity to learn this valued content and show what they know and can do. The assessment system will be field tested in the 2013-2014 school year and administered live for the first time during the 2014-2015 school year.

With strong support from member states, institutions of higher education, and industry, SBAC will develop a balanced set of measures and tools, each designed to serve specific purposes. Together, these components will provide student data throughout the academic year that will inform instruction, guide interventions, help target professional development, and ensure an accurate measure of each student's progress toward career and college readiness.

In preparation for the SBAC assessments in the 2014-2015 school year, Nevada has begun the process of recoding existing assessment items to the NVACS. New items, aligned only to the NVACS, are currently being written, with field-testing to begin in spring of 2012. During each of the test administrations in 2013 and 2014, up to 15% of the live items on the Reading and Mathematics tests will be replaced by the new items. Test items and the accompanying item statistics will be released after the 2012 administration. The addition of the new NVACS items to the live assessments has been designed to follow the statewide instructional implementation of these standards. During School Year 2013-2014, the Field Test of the Smarter Balanced Assessment will be administered to selected schools to ensure a smooth transition to the live administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment in School Year 2014-2015. The Field Test will: 1) inform the State and Nevada districts about the capacity for on-line testing; and 2) help determine the validity of the items that will be live on the 2014-2015 Smarter Balanced Assessments.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) assessment of 2014-2015 will present additional challenges for students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs). Nevada

has committed to partnerships with other states in transitioning to the SBAC and in addressing the needs of students with disabilities and English language learning needs in meeting the more rigorous expectations that will exist through SBAC assessment efforts. Additionally, given its importance to our state, the NDE has allocated time for one of the Department's seven special education program professionals to be a member of the SBAC work group on accommodations and inclusion of special education students in SBAC assessments. This individual, Ms. Lisa Ford, is housed in the same office with peer colleagues in ELL and will continue to collaborate deeply around issues of assessing special education and ELL students. Also useful to this effort is the NDE's commitment to attending SBAC meetings as well as other professional networking opportunities offered by CCSSO and the Southwest Comprehensive Center at WestEd.

Transitioning to the SBAC Assessments and End-of-Course (EOC) Examinations in 2014-2015

The following timeline delineates Nevada's transition of SBAC assessments and EOC examinations .

2011-2012

- Nevada Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRTs) in reading and mathematics (grades 3-8) begin to field test items aligned to NVACS.
- 5th and 8th grade writing tests are removed from AYP in order to replicate online NVACS-aligned performance assessments to be administered through SBAC.
- SBAC creates assessment design: formative, interim and summative assessments, which are on-line computer adaptive and technology-based performance tasks.

2012-2013

- Some NVACs-aligned CRT items in reading and mathematics become "live"
- SBAC begins development of formative tools and interim and summative assessments aligned to NVACS.

2013-2014

- CRTs in reading and mathematics continue to count some NVACS-aligned items towards the student score.
- On-line large-scale field testing of the SBAC assessments will be administered in Nevada in elementary, middle, and high school.

2014-2015

- On-line SBAC assessments will be administered in grades 3-8 for purposes of school accountability.
- The HSPE will be administered to students in the cohort slated to graduate in 2015 and 2016, in accordance with their original high school graduation expectations.
- End-of-Course examinations for ELA I, ELA II and for Math I, Math II will be administered as the baseline year for Grades 9 and 10.

Students in the Graduating class of 2017are currently slated to be the first to use the high school End-of-Course examinations in ELA and mathematics as a requirement for graduation rather

than the HSPE

In anticipation of the full implementation of the SBAC assessments in 2014-2015, Nevada is planning only limited changes in the structure and content of the Nevada High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE). As the NVACS are implemented across the grades, items aligned with the NVACS will become dominant in the makeup of the tests, but the achievement levels that students need to meet to pass the test as a graduation requirement will remain at current levels. In order to provide information to students, parents, and schools on how the current achievement levels reflect or predict future success, the NDE will work with the state's school districts and IHE's to collect data linking the scores that students receive on the HSPE with scores or grades they subsequently achieve on measures of college and career readiness, such as the ACT, SAT, Accuplacer, or Workkeys® tests, or college placement tests that are administered when students enter postsecondary education. Similar to the studies conducted by ACT in the development of their College Readiness Benchmarks, the NDE will examine empirical data from a large sample of students in the State to evaluate how student scores on the current scales correlate to other measures of college and career readiness. The results of the study correlating performance on the HSPE with probabilities of success on other measures of college and career readiness will be published and shared with the education community in the State.

As Nevada moves toward full implementation of the SBAC assessments and initial administration of End-of-Course examinations in 2014-2015, districts and schools are engaged in efforts to prepare students for assessments of college- and career-readiness. A well-staged and collaborative process for informing educators across the State and for building capacity for delivering effective instruction built on the NVACS is ongoing. This collaboration among districts, the NDE, and the Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) has produced a number of resources available on the NDE and RPDP websites. These include transition documents, training materials, and updates pertinent to the NVACS available at)
http://www.doe.nv.gov/Curriculum_Standards/ .

National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG)

For the development of Alternate Assessments aligned to Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAS) aligned to the NVACS, Nevada is a member of the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG). Assessments designed under the work of this consortium will serve as alternate assessments to the SBAC, with Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)[7] as a partner in the AA-AAS project. The Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment System Consortium (DLM) is a group of 13 states dedicated to the development of an alternative assessment system. The consortium includes the States of Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. DLM is led by the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation (CETE).

The primary purpose of the NCSG-GSEG consortium is to build an assessment system based on research-based understanding of:

- technical quality of AA-AAS design

[7] Retrieved January 27, 2012 from http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/about/about.html

- formative and interim uses of assessment data
- summative assessments
- academic curriculum and instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities
- student learning characteristics and communication
- effective professional development

As with the general education assessments, Nevada is preparing for the administration of a full census field test of the NCSC-GSEG assessments in 2013-2014 and live testing in 2014-2015.

Additionally, Nevada will participate in SBAC's Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee (SWDAC). The SWDAC will assist the work groups and other Consortium efforts by providing guidance on how to develop accessible assessments for all students. The committee will be managed under a contract with Dr. Martha Thurlow, Director of the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) at the University of Minnesota and a leading expert on the assessment of students with disabilities.

World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)
Nevada has leveraged the opportunity to join forces with 28 other states who have signed on to the (WIDA) consortium currently funded through an Enhanced Assessment Grant (EAG) from the U.S. Department of Education. To better coordinate the assessment activities relating to ELLs, in 2011 the monitoring and analysis of the English Language Proficiency Assessment was brought into the oversight of the NDE Office of Assessment, Program Accountability and Curriculum (APAC). This shift is helping to facilitate planned analyses of the relationship of ELPA assessments to the assessment. WIDA Standards have been adopted and are in the process of being implemented in the field. The process of selecting an interim assessment to replace the current LAS Links assessment has been initiated. The alignment of the ELPA assessment with the Common Core State Standards will be a major step influencing the selection of the replacement assessment.

By collaborating with state consortia such as SBAC, WIDA, and NCSC-GSEG and with Nevada partners such as NSHE, the RPDPs, and with district administrators and teachers, Nevada is carefully and thoughtfully moving toward full implementation of the SBAC assessment in 2014-2015. This well-planned process will provide an effective transition for students and educators as the SBAC assessments and End-of-Course examinations move into center stage as measures of college- and career-readiness outcomes.

Obstacles to and Leadership for Achieving Success in Principle 1

Rollout of the Common Core State Standards (NVACS)
Meeting the needs of students with disabilities as well as English Language Learners is a challenge for every state, and Nevada is no exception. In order to continue to increase outcomes for this important population of students, engagement will be needed with national content and technical assistance centers to understand and scale up promising practices. Additionally challenging is the need to support effective, two-way communication with all necessary stakeholders. Under the direction and leadership of the Common Core Steering Committee, development and implementation of a comprehensive communication plan will be applied to leverage success in this arena. While the NDE does not have a Public Information Officer, access to support for communication and outreach efforts are anticipated to be available from the Governor's Office

within the coming months.

Primary responsibility for NVACS implementation efforts rest with the NDE's Office of Assessment, Program Accountability, and Curriculum, with targeted support from the Office of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs. Further support will be provided by the Office of Information Technology to foster development and implementation of the web-based and SharePoint infrastructures for information dissemination and sharing of resources among educators.

Transitioning to College and Career Readiness Expectations
SEA and Collaborative Groups' Staged Progression

Table 1.B.2 Key Milestones in Nevada's Transition to College- and Career-Ready Expectations

Awareness & System Capacity Building: Laying The Groundwork For Success
November 2009
Nevada Legislature passes Assembly Bill 563 to continue funding for Nevada Early Childhood Education for 2009-10 and 2010-11 with purpose of initiating or expanding pre-kindergarten education programs.
January 2010
College-readiness definition adopted **Responsible Party:** College-Readiness Taskforce, Nevada State Board of Education **Evidence:** Adopted Resolution (Attachment 1A)
June 2010
Nevada joins Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) **Responsible Party:** Nevada Department of Education, Office of Assessment, Program Accountability and Curriculum (NDE APAC) **Evidence:** Nevada 's Race to the Top Assessment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) *NV ESEA Flexibility Attachments* (Attachment 6)
June 2010
Comparative analysis of CCSS with existing Nevada standards completed in a collaborative effort that included: NDE-APAC and office of Special Education, Common Core Steering Committee, Regional Professional Development Programs and district professional development coordinators **Responsible Party**: NDE Assistant Director of Curriculum, Office of Assessment, Program Accountability and Curriculum (NDE APAC) **Evidence:** (Comparative Analysis available on request to NDE APAC Assistant Director of Curriculum)
September 2010
Validation of NV CCSS Implementation Steering Committee's comparative analysis of Common Core State Standards and Nevada Standards **Responsible Party: WestED** **Evidence:** WestEd Validation Study at https://bighorn.doe.nv.gov/sites/Common Core/default.aspx
October 2010
Common Core State Standards Adopted **Responsible Party:** Nevada State Board of Education **Evidence:** 2010-10-07 State Board Minutes: *NV ESEA Flexibility Attachments* (Attachment 4)
October 2010
Creation of the Nevada Coalition for the Transition to the Common Core State Standards (NCTCCS), a purposeful statewide effort aligned to the adoption of the CCSS/NVACS. This activity resulted in a framework for further work. Members include NDE-APAC Office of Special Education staff, the Common Core Steering Committee, staff from Regional Professional Development Programs, and district professional development

coordinators. **Responsible Party**: NDE Assistant Director of Curriculum, Office of Assessment, Program Accountability and Curriculum (NDE APAC) **Evidence:** Common Core Transition Materials at https://bighorn.doe.nv.gov/sites/Common Core/default.aspx CCSS/NVACS Transition Plan at https://bighorn.doe.nv.gov/sites/CommonCore/CCSS%20Brochure/CCSS%20NV%20Transition%20Plan%20Overview.pdf
March 2011
Nevada joins Career and Technical Education Consortium of States (CTECS) **Responsible Party:** NDE Director of Office of Career and Technical Education **Evidence:** CTECS Member Directory **http://ctecs.org/memberreps.htm**
September 2011
World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Standards adopted **Responsible Party:** NDE, Office of Special Ed, ESEA, and School Improvement **Evidence:** Map of WIDA Member States http://www.wida.us/membership/states/index.aspx
October 2011
Nevada applied for federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) funding to build an integrated system of early learning and development for Nevada's infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. This important work aligns statewide and local resources and priorities around the best interests of Nevada's children, to ultimately ensure that our youth are ready to compete in the global economy of the 21st century.
December 2011
NV joins National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG) multi-state project **Responsible Party:** NDE APAC **Evidence:** NCSC-GSEG Overview and Map of Member States http://www.ncscpartners.org/about
December 2011
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Advisory Council forms, defines STEM Education, plans further activities to support STEM Education **Responsible Party**: NDE Assistant Director of Curriculum, Office of Assessment, Program Accountability and Curriculum (APAC) **Evidence*:*** (Meeting notes provided upon request to NDE Assistant Director of Curriculum, APAC)
February 2012
NDE published *Employability Skills for Career Readiness Standards*, Performance Standards for Career Readiness **Responsible Party**: NDE Office of Career and Technical Education **Evidence:** Document available at http://nde.doe.nv.gov/CTE/Standards/CTE/CTE_EmployabilitySkillsForCareerReadiness.pdf
April 2012
1st of annual summits to provide forum for increased understanding of Early Childhood initiatives held at UNLV: *Ready for School, Ready for Life: The Increasing Significance of Early Childhood Education and School Readiness in Nevada*

Implementation Activities For Systemic Transition To College- & Career-Readiness
2011-2012
Professional Development focused on initial work with teachers and principals to support implementation of Common Core State Standards. • Work builds on previous work on Depth of Knowledge. • Focus for teachers on how to teach to the more rigorous standards; focus for principals on monitoring the collaboration of their teacher teams; focus for school leadership teams is on linking school improvement initiatives to daily practices. • Focus on instructional strategies for special populations and focused information dissemination to parents **Responsible Parties:** NDE APAC- Assistant Director of Curriculum; Regional Professional Development Programs; LEA Directors of Professional Development Evidence: Course descriptions and summary reports provided by RPDPs, LEAS; information on NDE website under NVACS **Obstacles or Challenges**: Changing the conversation from "what to teach" to "why" and "how" to teach the standards. Increasing capacity for educators and the public to interpret data from multiple measures of achievement. Broadening the expectations among educators, students, parents and the public for student learning outcomes to the Big-Picture and to the detailed understanding of College and Career Readiness.
2012-2013
Professional Development focused on continued work with school teams (grade levels/content areas) to improve their collaboration by focusing on the NVACS in planning for instruction, assessment, intervention and enrichment, and collaboratively developing formative and summative assessments to inform classroom practice. Professional development of teacher teams extends to not only the core content areas but also to the electives/non-core area teachers who can support the College and Career Readiness Standards through overt emphasis on the 6-12 Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies and Technical Subjects. Work for school teams based on ongoing data analysis of collaboratively developed formative and summative assessment results. Refinement and continued development of formative and summative assessments aligned to NVACS. LEAs to revisit and redesign curricular tools to support implementation of NVACS in classrooms. Data analysis of School Improvement initiatives aligns continuing improvement planning to performance as projected within plans. **Parent Involvement & Family Engagement (PIFE) Office created within NDE**. Evaluates LEAS PIFE Plans and Accountability Reports. First meeting of Advisory Council on Parental Involvement and Family Engagement.

Global Understanding Component of 21st Century Skills.
Curriculum Guide to be approved by State Board of Education: History and Contemporary Lifestyles of the Northern Paiute, Southern Paiute, Washoe and Western Shoshone."
Professional Development Days (Teacher Training Program, Pre-Service Teachers and In-Service Teacher Days.)

Striving Readers Literacy Activities
Continuing professional development will focus on the subgrantee districts and site level Data Based Decision Making teams. A comprehensive monitoring plan will include data collection and onsite observations, and on gathering the first year of data. Creating collaborative sharing opportunities between Nevada's Striving Readers districts will include video conferencing, webinars, access to national conferences and a summer institute.

Responsible Parties: NDE APAC- Assistant Director of Curriculum; Regional Professional Development Programs; LEA Directors of Professional Development & Curriculum; Principals and School Teams, PIFE Education Programs Professional, Indian Education Programs Professional, . Striving Readers Project Manager.

Evidence: School Improvement Plan analysis and meeting notes. Site and LEA data on outcomes of formative and summative assessments School teams' meeting notes. Meeting notes from PIFE Advisory Council meeting.

Challenges or Obstacles: Timely reporting of data to inform day-to-day classroom practice. Increasing school teams' and principals' expertise in using multiple sources of data to inform improved formative practices.

2013-2014

Districts Use and Refine Curricular tools based on the NVACS, continue to adjust grade level content to reflect the NVACS, phasing out content not in the NVACS. Educators continue to improve instructional skills and understanding of NVACS and in integrating formative practice into education. LEAs engage in supporting collaboration for vertical and horizontal articulation within schools and across school levels (Elementary, Middle, High School)

RPDP's and LEA's Professional Development focuses on refining programs and professional learning based on timely and nuanced data from multiple measures. Model Instructional Units are shared within and across districts.

Data analysis of School Improvement initiatives aligns continuing improvement planning to performance as projected within plans.

PIFE Education Programs Professional works with State Board to create policies governing PIFE, creates resource base of best and effective practices for each school district, serves on Statewide Council for the Coordination of Regional Training Programs (SCCRTP) to create and maintain PIFE training for educators, creates data base of competitive PIFE grant opportunities, works with districts to establish PIFE advisory Councils.

Striving Readers Literacy Grant Activities
District and site observations will continue. Coaching and professional development for Striving Readers district level and site level staff will be provided. A "what works" best practices statewide vision will begin expanding out to the non-Striving Readers districts. A review and refinement of the Striving Readers communication plan will ensure the connectivity capabilities of the NDE. The NDE will also work closely with the External Evaluator in the collection and reporting requirements as set forth by the U.S. Department of Education.

Parties Responsible: NDE APAC- Assistant Director of Curriculum; Regional Professional Development Programs; LEA Directors of Professional Development & Curriculum; Principals and School Teams, PIFE Education Programs Professional, Striving Readers Project Manager.

Evidence: School Improvement Plan analysis and meeting notes. Site and LEA data on outcomes of formative and summative assessments School teams' meeting notes Policies adopted by State Board for PIFE, data base of PIFE best practices, Notes from SCCRTP meetings.

Challenges or Obstacles: Anticipating and designing formative and benchmark assessments aligned with SBAC. Establishing and communicating uniform expectations for rigorous NVACS aligned curriculum, course outlines, and other structures supporting vertically and horizontally aligned instruction.

2014-2015

Professional Development to fully implement NVACS curriculum. Continue to integrate formative practice into instruction. Refine and improve curricular tools and model units based on feedback and on data analysis. Continue to support instructional improvement by providing examples of excellent student work. Continue to provide through SEA and LEA websites resources to support NVACS-based instruction. Continue to support reflective practices of school-based and other educator teams.

Data analysis of School Improvement initiatives aligns continuing improvement planning to performance as projected within plans.

PIFE efforts continue with support for districts and schools to build capacity to use PIFE to improve student achievement.

Parties Responsible: NDE APAC- Assistant Director of Curriculum; Regional Professional Development Programs; LEA Directors of Professional Development & Curriculum; Principals and School Teams, PIFE Education Programs Professional.

Challenges or Obstacles: Preparation for the SBAC assessments and End-of Course examinations: Fully aligning all system elements to prepare for the implementation of the SBAC and EOCs, including assuring that all technological needs – resources and training - are addressed.

1.C DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER ANNUAL, STATEWIDE, ALIGNED, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS THAT MEASURE STUDENT GROWTH

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A

☒ The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition.

i. Attach the State's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)

Option B

☒ The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.

i. Provide the SEA's plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.

Option C

☐ The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.

i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)

Nevada will continue to pursue Option A as indicated above by participating in the Smarter Balanced Consortium and by administering the Smarter Balanced Assessment in 2014-2015 to students in grades 3-8.

Nevada will also pursue Option B as indicated above for students belonging to graduation cohorts for 2016-2017 and beyond. NDE will develop and begin in 2014-2015 to annually administer statewide aligned, high-quality EOC examinations. As the data from these examinations is validated, Nevada will measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics at least once in high school in all LEAs. Nevada will continue to administer the existing HSPE as a graduation requirement for students who started ninth grade in or before 2012-2013, in the graduation cohorts of 2015 and 2016. This will allow students who started under the existing assessment program to continue under the same system in which they started. All students who started ninth grade in or after 2013-2014 will be required to meet the new EOC assessment requirements. For 2014-2015, the HSPE will provide the status/proficiency indicator for high school accountability.

Nevada has attached a timeline (*Nevada End-of-Course Timeline 2014-2016*) which will accompany any required submissions related to the EOC examinations to the Department for peer review.

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STATE-BASED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA's plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF)

In keeping with the core values upon which the overarching accountability system is constructed, Nevada's School Performance Framework (NSPF) has been created to diagnose school performance and leverage targeted interventions to yield increased student achievement. Discussion and debate in advance of the development of the Nevada SPF model concurred that it was crucial to present school performance in multiple ways. Therefore, the NSPF is set against a 100-point index derived primarily from indicators around growth, status, and gap at the elementary and middle school levels; and status, gap, graduation, and career and college readiness at high school. The performance indicators ultimately selected for inclusion in the NSPF were meant to portray student achievement in both a criterion and normative sense. Use of school-level proficiency rates is a clear indicator of criterion-referenced indicator of proficiency status. The use of normative data in establishing criterion-based standards is a common practice across all areas of educational measurement. Therefore, while targets established for the NSPF index tables were derived using normative methodology, this process allowed the SEA to determine rigorous but attainable expectations for Nevada's schools. The values within these index tables then become the criterion by which all schools are evaluated each year. The percentage of students meeting their adequate growth percentiles (AGPs) is another indicator of progress (growth) toward proficiency. The Nevada stakeholder core group opted to rely heavily upon Dr. Damian Betebenner's SGP Growth Model for measuring student performance; and, as is widely known, the SGP model does make relative comparison rather than absolute comparisons. But most are less familiar with the manner in which the SGP growth model includes an Adequate Growth Percentile (AGP) that assesses whether a student is on-track to proficiency within three years or by the eighth grade. AGP values are, therefore, criterion-based; and are used in some states as an additional indicator of proficiency. The SEA asserts that the combination of proficiency rates (status), SGP and AGP for students provides a combination of criterion and normative comparisons. Schools can only earn the highest available points for proficiency by achieving at the 95th percentile. Additionally, in order to attain five-star status, schools that earn maximum proficiency rates must score within the top ranges of growth, gap, and graduation (where applicable) rates; thereby also demonstrating that students at all ability levels are demonstrating above-average rates of growth in five-star schools.

For any particular grade level or content area, the median SGP will always be 50 and the median SGP for schools will approximate 50, meaning that the expectation that students or school will

incrementally improve on that measure to an SGP of 99 is unrealistic. The SEA is collaborating on research with a group of nationally recognized research scientists to assess the reliability of the school-level median SGP over time. The preliminary findings indicate that the school-level medians are not conducive to AMO target setting like that utilized for school-level proficiency rates.

The SEA deliberately chose to move away from the current NCLB accountability model that awards full credit for very different performance levels on any given indicator. Under the current model if the AMO is 60 percent, the school meeting the AMO with a 60 percent measure receives the same credit as a school exceeding the AMO with a 90 percent measure. Also in the same scenario, a school missing the AMO with a 59 percent measure receives no credit for their performance. The conjunctive nature of the current AYP model is outdated and penalizes schools just missing the AMOs and fails to recognize the schools exceeding the AMOs by a great margin. Measuring the students' performance at a school against strict criterions or AMOs places the schools or subgroups in a dichotomous pass or fail scenario which is contrary to traditional educational measures that seek to quantify the performance on a continuum.

That being said, the SEA went to great lengths to develop a statistically sound method from which to compare schools against one another and against a criterion. For any particular performance indicator, partial or maximum points are earned based on the performance level of the students at the school. The target or objective for every indicator is the 5-Star level; earning the maximum number of points. The target for every school is the same; the highest proficiency rate, the highest growth rate, the highest attendance rate, the highest graduation rate, and the greatest gap reductions.

The Nevada SPF was designed in a manner that would place approximately 50 percent of the schools in a broad middle-ground and this large group of schools (3 Star) would be generally described as typical or average. For these schools, significant increases in proficiency rates or significant increases in growth would result in substantially higher school index scores and perhaps, movement from a 3 Star classification to a 4 Star classification. As a school moves up in index score and moves up in school classification, the public will be keenly aware that the school is becoming more effective and the students are becoming more successful.

The SEA should point out that, by design, the Nevada SPF identifies approximately 75 percent of the public schools as a 3-, 4-, or 5-Star school. The proposed methodology contributes to the idea that only 25 percent of the public schools will be viewed as needing improvement, which differs considerably from the current NCLB accountability model that currently identifies approximately 55 percent of schools as not having made AYP in the 2010-11 school year. All 3-Star schools will be required to develop a school improvement plan unique to each school that identifies student needs and includes action plans needed to increase student outcomes. The SEA routinely analyzes school performance for a variety of reporting purposes and will not allow schools to become complacent with repeated 3-Star ratings combined with low school index scores.

For an elementary school to earn enough points in the NSPF and achieve a Five Star rating, the school proficiency rates would need to be approximately 75 percent in reading and approximately 85 percent in mathematics. Using the 2010-2011 data and model proposed in this application, the 49 elementary schools earning a Five Star classification had average school proficiency rates for reading and mathematics of 77.7 and 85.9 percent respectively. Both rates are far above the respective 2011 AMOs of 63 and 71 percent proficient for reading and mathematics. The median SGPs required for

a Five Star elementary school would be in the range of 65 for both reading and mathematics, indicating that a high proportion of students are growing at higher than typical rates. The percentage of IEP, LEP, and FRL students meeting their individual Adequate Growth Percentile (AGP) in the school must also be in the range of 60 to 65 percent, which indicates that a substantial proportion of these populations are on track to becoming proficient within the next three years.

The school proficiency rates would need to be approximately 65 percent in reading and approximately 80 percent in mathematics for middle schools to achieve a Five Star rating. A total of 11 middle schools earned a Five Star rating on the basis of the 2010-11 assessment data. The average proficiency rates were 67.9 and 80.2 percent for reading and mathematics respectively. Both content area proficiency rates are far above the respective 2011 AMOs of 54 and 68 percent proficient for reading and mathematics. The school median SGPs required for a Five Star middle school would be in the range of 58 for both reading and mathematics. The percentage of IEP, LEP, and FRL students meeting their individual AGPs in the school must also be at or near the 95th percentile of all middle schools.

For a high school to achieve a Five Star rating, the school reading proficiency rates would need to be approximately 73 percent for 10th grade first-time test takers and approximately 96 percent for the 11th grade cumulative rate. The school mathematics proficiency rates would need to be on the order of 76 percent for 10th grade rate and approximately 92 percent for 11th grade rate. For the six high schools earning a Five Star rating, the average 11th grade proficiency rates were 97.0 and 94.8 percent for reading and mathematics, respectively. Both of these proficiency rates are far above the respective 2011 AMOs of 73 and 78 percent proficient for reading and mathematics. A Five Star high school would also be expected to report a Cohort Graduation Rate (4-year) of approximately 90 percent and, in fact, the average graduation rate for the Five Star high schools was 95.5 percent. The proficiency and graduation rates for IEP, LEP, and FRL students would approximate the rates for the state "all students" group. Finally, Five Star high schools would have high percentages of students graduating with advanced diplomas (>50 percent) and a high percentage of students passing AP courses or earning college credit while enrolled in high school.

In order to avoid the unintended consequences described above, the SEA proposes to re-evaluate the performance indicator point attributions for the 2012-13 school year for three important reasons. First, the SEA seeks to ensure that the performance indicator point attributions and targets are ambitious but achievable. Second, the transitional cut scores approved by the State Board for the new mathematics assessment are slated to expire after the 2011-12 school year and a significant change in student proficiency rates would necessitate the resetting of targets. And finally, the SEA wishes to provide the LEAs and schools with the opportunity to learn about and establish a comfort level with the Nevada SPF over the next 16 months.

Stakeholders have stated that growth matters tremendously, both for whole school consideration and for focused attention on subpopulations. While indicators of growth are weighted most heavily in elementary and middle schools (40% in growth and 20% in gap), college and career outcome measures and status are of primary importance at high school. High school is the culminating stage of the student's experience within an aligned PreK-12 system. Measures of college- and career-readiness, therefore, must be reflective of the outcomes that are correlated with success in higher education and high-skilled careers. As indicated in Principle 1, Nevada high school students will be participating in assessments that will be fully aligned to the NVACS through four End-of-Course

examinations implemented in School Year 2014-2015 as required by Assembly Bill 288[8] . While Nevada's existing high school test used for accountability is aligned with high school exit standards, the End-of-Course examinations to be administered in the 2014-2015 school year will be assessing students against the NVACS, standards of college- and career-readiness.

While Nevada's theory of action, ensuring that the new accountability system reflects the important values held by the various state stakeholders, provided the foundation for the selection of the indicators used in the NSPF; it is important that these measures also meet other important criteria:

- First of all, the selection of each individual indicator and the compilation across multiple indicators provides reliability to a system that would otherwise be sensitive to year-to-year fluctuations within and across schools. Additionally, many of the indicators have been used in Nevada's accountability system since the inception of NCLB and have undergone the scrutiny of public opinion, as well as the technical scrutiny associated with the federal peer review process. Among indicators new to Nevada's accountability system, the Nevada Growth Model data have been reported to exhibit "moderate to high reliability in projecting student performance in the future[9].
- Secondly, the selected indicators are feasible to capture, validate, and report. Unless local and state officials have the capacity to implement and properly collect data with full fidelity to intent, the system will lose public confidence and its scores and classifications will not be valid. Our research indicates that the targets associated with these indicators are rigorous, but attainable. (See Section 2.B for details.)
- Third, multiple indicators were selected to provide incremental validity. Since no one indicator can single-handedly provide sufficient information on which to make a determination of school or educator effectiveness, a number of different, but complementary indicators were selected by which to assign a school's classification. Indicators will be validated using multiple regression or factor analysis techniques to ensure that the selected indicators are not redundant and continue to support the value associated with a system of multiple measures. Table 2.A.1 shows an outline of the points assigned to each of the indicators within the NSPF.
- And finally, the NDE has conducted extensive analyses comparing assessment, growth, and graduation data on Reward, Priority, and Focus schools with ranking within the Nevada School Performance Framework. These analyses substantiate the consistency of the identification of such schools under the NSPF. The design of the NSPF is such that a school with significant gaps, low status, or low graduation rates cannot achieve a school index score required to earn a 5-Star school rating. NDE will continue to work with districts and stakeholders to monitor and plan improvements to the accountability system to assure that the system accurately reflects Nevada's values of credibility, defensibility, fairness, accuracy, feasibility, and transparency.

Toward this end, the NDE has configured a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to provide guidance and support for determining the business rules that the NDE will apply to ensure that the outcomes are aligned with the purpose of the system. In the extremely unanticipated circumstance that a school with a low score in graduation rates or other performance indicator rises to a level higher than seems appropriate, appropriate business rules will be applied to eliminate this circumstance.

[8] Assembly Bill 288, enrolled 06/10/2013 and approved by Governor Brian Sandoval on 06/11/2014.
[9] O'Malley, Kimberly J., Stephen Murphy, Katie Larsen McClarty, Daniel Murphy, and Yuanyuan McBride. *Overview of Student Growth Models*. Retrieved February 17, 2012 from http://www.pearsonassessments.com/hai/Images/tmrs/Student_Growth_WP_083111_FINAL.pdf

Again, this is very unanticipated given the purposeful modeling of the system. The indicators are intentionally designed not to be compensatory in nature, to prevent this very outcome.

Table 2.A.1 NSPF Indicators within a Point-Based System

School Level	Growth	Status	Gap	Graduation	College / Career Readiness	Other	Total
Elementary Middle Schools	40	30	20			10	**100**
High Schools	Growth proxy in Status & Gap	30	10	30	16	14	**100**

NSPF Performance Classifications

Nevada's weighted school performance model is undergirded by a point-based system, in which schools will be assigned a classification ranging from "1-Star" for lowest performing schools through a "5-Star" label for those in the highest performing category. Differentiated rewards and interventions follow the ratings within a framework of Managed Performance Empowerment, rewarding high performance with autonomy and tightly managing underperformance through focused support. This approach operationalizes statewide stakeholder values of a "loose-tight" orientation. The NDE and school districts will be tight on expectations for all schools, and will implement a continuum of rewards and supports with greater "operational" autonomy (e.g., flexible use of allocations) following proven performance and more tightly controlled management (e.g., required curriculum audit) following under-performance. This orientation is aligned with the State's Response to Intervention (RTI) framework, providing more support based on identified need. In 2009, Nevada established and formalized through State regulations, a differentiated approach to supporting schools wherein interventions are assigned differentially based on needs established through a formalized system of school level data collection and analysis. This work paves the way for continued differentiation in school supports, as described in this section of the application.

Assessment data from the 2011-2012 school year will be the first for full public reporting of the NSPF. In order to establish NSPF school classifications, analyses were conducted for all Nevada schools using 2010-2011 data and the NSPF index values which are described in more detail in section 2.B. Schools were then grouped from highest to lowest in terms of their index values. In order to mitigate misclassification of schools due to measurement variations, the NSPF provides for a very conservative identification of 1-Star and 5-Star schools. The overall index values for the school(s) at the 90th percentile then formed the basis for the point range expectations attributed to 5-Star schools. Conversely, the schools among the lowest 5% of schools within the NSPF formed the basis for a 1-Star rating. Continuing in this manner, a 4-Star rating represents schools in the 75th to 89th percentile range, a 3-Star rating represents schools within the 25th to 74th percentiles, and 2-Star schools fall between the 5th to 24th percentiles. Table 2.A.2 outlines the points associated with each of the five performance classifications within the NSPF.

In addition to identifying schools within the five classifications of performance described above, a school may also be designated as Reward (Highest Performing, High Progress, or Exemplary), Focus (low "subgroup" performance), or Priority (low "all students" performance. Designation criteria for Reward, Priority, and Focus schools can be found in this document under sections 2.C, 2.D, and 2E respectively.

Table 2.A.2 NSPF Performance Classifications

NSPF Performance Classifications	Index Points Associated with Performance Classification
5 Stars	≥ 77
4 Stars	≥ 68 and < 77
3 Stars	≥ 50 and < 68
2 Stars	≥ 32 and < 50
1 Star	< 32

N-Counts

Especially noteworthy is the attention that Nevada is paying to subpopulations. Since the inception of NCLB, Nevada has had a subpopulation N size of 25 students. Nevada believes that the "Next Generation" accountability system should pull in or include the assessment results of a greater number of students and report on the special populations for more schools, and proposes to reduce the N-count threshold to 10 students for reporting of the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF). As illustrated in Table 2.A.3, in 2011 under the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) analysis, fewer than 60 percent of Nevada schools were held accountable for the achievement of students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or students with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Under the proposed NSPF model, the percentage of schools held accountable for the IEP subgroup increases to 75 percent, while the percentage of schools held accountable for the LEP subgroup increases to 70 percent. The percentage of schools held accountable for the FRL subgroup increases modestly from 74 percent to approximately 80 percent.

Table 2.A.3: Subgroup Comparison between NCLB and Nevada Proposed Accountability

	Totals		NCLB				ESEA WAIVER			
Sub-group	# of Stu-dents	# of Schoo ls	# of Stu-dents	% of Stu-dents	# of Scho ols	% of School s	# of Stu-dents	% of Stu-dents	# of School s	% of School s
IEP	25031	683	22434	89.6%	404	59.2%	24410	97.5%	516	75.5%

LEP	56807	683	55169	97.1%	400	58.6%	56442	99.4%	473	69.3%
FRL	109479	683	108570	99.2%	505	73.9%	109229	99.8%	549	80.4%

In Nevada, it is still true, though, that there are schools with fewer than 10 students in a subpopulation at a given grade level. In the event that a school does not have at least 10 students within **each** of these three subgroup categories, an NSPF analysis is made under a **"supergroup"** calculation. The supergroup consists of an unduplicated count of students who are associated with one or more of the IEP, ELL, and FRL subgroups. In the 2010-2011 AYP analysis, over one-third of Nevada's 600+ schools had fewer than 10 students in one or more of the identified subgroups; and were, therefore exempt from the standard NSPF subgroup analysis. The addition of the supergroup analysis ensured that over 200 schools with one or more very small subgroup populations were able to be evaluated in the NSPF for subgroup performance. Even when the supergroup analysis must be used for a school, any of the three subgroups with a minimum of ten students will be reported separately. As in the past, the NDE will continue to report publicly the results for each of the seven race-ethnicity subgroups, with the expectation that school improvement planning will address needs identified among those subgroups and that state reporting data will support such planning.

The NDE intends to explore the possible use of confidence intervals as a means to reduce the likelihood of erroneously designating or classifying a school within the NSPF resulting from small N-counts, while maintaining a strong commitment to ensure high expectations for all students. This approach allows the State to ensure that truly, no students are missed within the accountability system. Confidence intervals can be used to control for year-to-year instability created by factors unrelated to instruction or school effectiveness. The degree of confidence is predetermined at 95% upper-tail prior to conducting the statistical tests. In this way, the same degree of confidence can be achieved regardless of N-count.

When identifying schools for Reward, Focus, or Priority classifications, the NDE will use an N-count of 25 in order to assure increased statistical reliability given the significant consequences for those schools.

Subgroups

Nevada proposes to closely monitor and report on the academic performance (status and growth) for seven race/ethnicity subgroups (Alaskan/Native American, Asian, African American, Hispanic, Caucasian, Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races) and three additional subgroups (IEP, LEP, and FRL). As is the current practice, the school-level academic performance of every subgroup will be reported on the Nevada Report Card for students enrolled at their respective school for the full academic year. Further, the subgroup performance will be displayed on the Report Card in a manner that clearly indicates whether each subgroup meets the ELA and Mathematics AMOs described elsewhere in this request. Additionally, in order to provide the most targeted information for program improvement and student interventions, Nevada is committed to reporting student performance separately for each of the following categories:

a. Current ELL (preferably available overall and by English Language Proficiency Level as determined by the ELPA);
b. Former ELL students less than one year-exit;
c. Former ELL students greater than one and less than two year-exit;
d. All Former ELL students with exit greater than two years

Based on definitions under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), student performance will be reported separately for each of the following categories:

a. Current IEP
b. Former IEP students less than two year-exit;
c. All Former IEP students with exit greater than two years

Nevada stakeholders thoughtfully considered and deliberately opted not to utilize race/ethnicity performance measures in the proposed school performance framework. Stakeholders concurred that out-of-school factors other than race/ethnicity were far more likely to contribute to lower levels of academic performance. Learning disabilities, language barriers, and difficulties associated with low socioeconomic status, to name a few, are more closely related to academic performance than is race/ethnicity status. A large body of empirical research supports the idea that the analysis of "achievement gaps" should be addressed in the context of socioeconomic status rather than race/ethnicity comparisons. The Nevada stakeholders concurred that the focused attention to the academic performance of the IEP, LEP, and FRL subgroups would simultaneously represent the vast majority of low-performing students from the race/ethnicity categories that are historically the lowest performing. An important aspect of the Nevada SPF that differs from some other accountability models resides in the methodology for subgroup point attributions, which will be described later in this application.

In order to assess the concern about not considering the race/ethnicity gap calculation in the Nevada SPF, the SEA conducted some preliminary analyses on the relationship between student demographic characteristics and proficiency status. After collapsing the African American, American Indian, and Hispanic race/ethnicity subgroups into a non-Caucasian group and comparing the proficiency rate to that for the remaining cases, only a weak correlation *(R = 0.223)* was observed. The correlations between ELL and IEP status are slightly higher (*R = 0.250 and 0.252* for ELL and IEP, respectively) and slightly lower (*R = 0.209*) for FRL status which is not entirely unexpected.

Two main points come out of this work:

- The inclusion of race/ethnicity status (non-Caucasian) does not add much new or different information about achievement gaps.
- Race/ethnicity status is weakly to moderately correlated to FRL and ELL status meaning that the ELL and FRL gaps include many non-Caucasian students.

Another body of research and some advocacy groups argue that monitoring the race/ethnicity achievement gaps is an action necessary to reduce the gaps. Nevada stakeholders are not at odds with this assertion and will continue to monitor and transparently report on the academic achievement of all current ESEA subgroups, provided the N-count threshold of 10 students for the NSPF is met. As a means to incentivize the LEA's focus on the achievement of traditionally underserved subgroups, Reward status will be reserved for Title I schools whose ESEA subgroups all meet both ELA and mathematics AMOs in addition to meeting other criteria. Whereas Focus schools will be identified on the basis of IEP, LEP, and FRL gap analysis and will undoubtedly factor into exit criteria on a school by school basis, race/ethnicity achievement gap reductions may also form part of the Focus school exit criteria. For Reward, Focus and Priority schools an analysis based on an N-count of 25 will assure statistical reliability.

The SEA contends that the LEAs and schools will closely monitor all of the ESEA subgroup gaps as the race/ethnicity gaps are expected to be indirectly reflected in the IEP, LEP, and FRL gaps. The SEA further contends that folding race/ethnicity calculations into the gap analysis would add unnecessary complexities to the Nevada SPF and to a large degree replicate the IEP, LEP, and FRL gap measures. Also, inclusion of all ESEA subgroups supports the situation where the academic performance of certain students is counted more than once.

Stakeholder Feedback on Other Indicators

Among the over-1500 stakeholders who responded to Nevada's ESEA Waiver Survey, 89% agreed that school success should be measured by more than merely test scores. The respondents further cited the importance of considerations such as classroom observations, attendance, graduation rates, administrator observations, parent surveys, staff surveys, and student surveys. As data become available and methodology is in place, these and other indicators will comprise the 10% "Other Indicator" measure in the Nevada School Performance Framework school index.

Research shows that school improvement is a complex process, especially as it pertains to schools that face a number of challenges correlated to poverty. A 2010 Report, *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*[10], cites "essential supports" needed to turn around the nation's neediest schools. These are strong school leadership, strong parent-community ties, professional capacity of staff including commitment to the school and inclination to embrace innovation, a welcoming, stimulating climate centered on learning for all students, and aligned and rigorous curriculum and instruction. The report emphasizes the importance of all five essential supports, rather than focusing on one or two areas, and concludes that a school where all five supports are strong is at least 10 times more likely to achieve substantial gains in reading and math than other schools where only one or two areas are strengths. These supports are interwoven in the differentiated system of support articulated in this application. Further, as measures of the presence and degree of efficacy of the essential supports are deepened these may provide important information, given statistical reliability and validity, to serve as indicators to measure essential supports within the Other Indicator and will be added to the Nevada School Performance Framework as determined appropriate.

Participation Expectations

In order to ensure that as many students as possible factor into the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF), assessment data include the State's Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT), High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE) and the Nevada Alternate Assessment (NAA) as appropriate. As per the current accountability system, schools are held accountable for only those students who were enrolled for the full academic year (i.e., students who were continuously enrolled in a school from the official count day to the time of testing are included in the analyses). On the HSPE, participation rates are calculated for the spring administration of 11th grade; and additionally counted as participants are all students who have passed prior to this administration. The CRT testing window is open ten days on either side of the 150th day of instruction for all schools, while the testing window for the NAA begins February 1st and ends April 30th. As a result of these lengthy testing windows, schools are expected to assess at least 95% of the enrolled students in their

[10] Bryk, Anthony S., Penny Bender Sebring, Elaine Allensworth, Stuart Luppescu, and John O. Easton. *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 2010.

test grade levels regardless of how long they have been enrolled in the school. Nevada schools have a strong history in the area of participation rates on State-mandated assessments, with an overall average of over 99%. To ensure that this high standard continues, for any school that tests fewer than 95% of its eligible student population in a single school year, a secondary analysis will be conducted with a two- or three-year weighted average (as needed). If none of these analyses result in a participation rate of 95%, the school will be identified as a 1-Star school regardless of its NSPF index value. Similar expectations for 95% participation will be in place as new assessments aligned to the Nevada Academic Content Standards are implemented.

The SEA believes that the participation expectations for the ten traditional ESEA subgroups (seven race/ethnicity groups, IEP, ELL, and FRL) should reflect that for the "All Students" group as described above. Schools are expected to assess at least 95% of the students in each of the ESEA subgroups regardless of how long they have been enrolled in the school and regardless of size. Beginning in the 2013-14 assessment year, the SEA will publically report the participation rates for all of the ESEA subgroups on the NSPF school reports. To ensure that the current high participation standard continues, for any school that tests fewer than 95% of any ESEA subgroup population in a single school year, a secondary analysis will be conducted with a two- or three-year weighted average (as needed).

Schools failing to meet the ESEA subgroup participation rate of 95% and failing to meet the weighted average calculated participation rate of 95% over the most recent two or three years for the first year will be publically identified as failing this important metric. The NSPF school report will prominently display the "PARTICIPATION WARNING" with the school index score and Star Rating. If the school fails to meet the ESEA subgroup participation rate of 95% and fails to meet the weighted average calculated participation rate of 95% over the most recent two or three years for a second consecutive year, the Status Indicator will be reduced by a total of six points and the NSPF school report will prominently display the "PARTICIPATION PENALTY" designation with the school index score and Star Rating.

If a school fails to meet the ESEA subgroup participation rate of 95% and fails to meet the weighted average calculated participation rate of 95% over the most recent two or three years for a third consecutive year, the school will be identified as and subjected to a "CONTINUING PARTICIPATION PENALTY". Schools designated as such will earn zero points for the Status Indicator (elementary and middle schools) or Achievement/Status Indicator (high schools).

The NSPF point attribution tables for the elementary and middle school "Status' indicator are allocated in three-point increments for reading and math. The six point reduction from the "Status" indicator (three points in math and three points in reading/ELA) has the effect of "knocking" the school down one level within the point attribution levels for failure to meet the subgroup participation expectation. Albeit slightly different, the same rule holds true for the "Achievement/Status" indicator for high schools. This penalty is aligned with the notion that school proficiency rates might be inflated due to lower than expected subgroup participation rates. The SEA contends it is more appropriate to reduce points rather than reducing proficiency rates without evidence (student results) supporting the proficiency rate reduction. Further, any school subjected to the "PARTICIPATION WARNING" or "PARTICIPATION PENALTY" or the "CONTINUING PARTICIPATION PENALTY" will not be eligible for Reward School status and the measures comprising the Status indicators will be suppressed on the NSPF school reports.

Under the proposed Subgroup Participation Penalty, schools receive a "warning" after sub-marginal participation rates are demonstrated over a period of time (current year and then a three year average). If the subgroup participation rates cannot be improved with a focused effort over the next year, then the Subgroup Participation Penalty is fully warranted. If the participation rates cannot be improved after a warning (Year 1) and penalty (Year 2), the severe continuing penalty is warranted for the third consecutive year (year 3) of low subgroup participation rates. Based on the demonstration and impact data below, the SEA contends that a strong "warning" is warranted prior to the imposition of any penalty as most schools are eager to self-correct. The SEA contends that the proposed Subgroup Penalty will be meaningful to the LEAs and schools.

Subgroup Participation Penalty Reporting Timeline

For the 2012-13 NSPF, the SEA will assign schools a Star rating and identify those schools with one or more subgroups not meeting the 95 percent participation expectation with a "PARTICIPATION WARNING" designation. For the 2012-13 NSPF, this warning will be in the form of a written communication from the SEA to the LEA or charter school as applicable. The 2012-13 NSPF and subsequent LEA notification will serve as the "official warning" of underperforming subgroup participation rates. No schools will be subjected to the "PARTICIPATION PENALTY" in the 2012-13 NSPF reporting.

Beginning with the 2013-14 NSPF, the SEA will prominently display the "PARTICIPATION WARNING" and "PARTICIPATION PENALTY" on the public reports. Schools labeled with the subgroup participation warning in 2012-13 will be subjected to the participation penalty in the 2013-14 school year if any subgroup fails to meet the 95 percent participation expectation. For the 2013-14 NSPF reporting, some schools may be subjected to the "PARTICIPATION PENALTY" while some others may be subjected to the "PARTICIPATION WARNING".

Starting in the 2014-15 NSPF reporting, some schools may be subjected to the "CONTINUING PARTICIPATION PENALTY" while others may be subjected to one of the lesser consequences.

NSPF Framework for Elementary and Middle Schools

Growth

One of the fundamental components of the Nevada School Performance Framework in elementary and middle schools is reliance on measures of student growth including trajectories toward achievement of established learning targets. Assembly Bill 14 from the 2009 Nevada legislative session supported efforts already underway within the State to adopt and implement a growth model for use with State-mandated assessments. Nevada subsequently adopted the student growth percentile method developed by Dr. Damian Betebenner; and reported results from elementary and middle schools (grades 4-8) on the State's CRTs for the first time in August of 2011. The Nevada Growth Model enables Nevada to gauge improvement of student, school, and district achievement.

The Nevada Growth Model produces both norm- and criterion-referenced data that are best understood in combination. The norm-referenced information is invaluable given that it provides a comparative context in which to understand performance, along with the criterion-referenced context of status. In other words, we can tell both the student's absolute level of achievement (i.e., emerging/developing, approaches standard, meets standard, or exceeds standard) and the extent to which the student has made academic progress relative to similar scoring peers (e.g., the student has

grown academically at or above the rate of 65% of students scoring in the below standard level of achievement). Since each student with two consecutive years of student achievement can be provided with a Student Growth Percentile (SGP), the school Median Growth Percentiles (MGP) can be determined and reported for all schools and subgroups of students. With a heavy reliance on Nevada's unique student ID feature in the System of Accountability Information in Nevada (SAIN) (i.e., the State's longitudinal data system), over 90% of tested students in grades 4-8 are assigned an SGP. Use of Nevada Growth Model data, including the reliability of SGPs and school MGPs in Nevada's most transient schools will continue to be evaluated. As illustrated below in Table 2.A.4, MGP targets in reading and mathematics for the "all students" group comprise 20% of the NSPF calculations.

In addition to the normative "growth" output, by anchoring growth expectations to the performance standards within the State's assessment system, the model can also be used to assess whether the growth students are making is sufficient to get them to the destination in time — namely, growth to a standard with a consistent criterion. This second use of the growth data, referred to as a student Adequate Growth Percentile (AGP) is essential to assessing whether or not students are on track to attain and maintain proficiency. Growth to a standard allows for expectations of progress to be individualized to the unique performance pattern of each student. AGPs for students who score in the non-proficient ranges on the CRTs are based on reaching a target of proficiency in three years or 8th grade, whichever comes first. Targets for students who are already proficient are based on their projection to either stay in the "Meets Standard" category or move into the "Exceeds Standard" level of proficiency. As illustrated in Table 2.A.4, AGP targets in reading and mathematics for the "all students" group comprise 20% of the NSPF analysis.

Gap

Nevada is committed to using growth data in a criterion-referenced approach to reduce performance gaps among each of the lowest-performing subgroups identified earlier in this section. Therefore, subgroup or supergroup (as applicable) performance around AGP targets in reading and mathematics comprise 20% of the NSPF.

Status

While measuring student growth is an important component of the NSPF, student attainment of proficiency (status) is another. Therefore, status targets in reading and mathematics on the CRT and NAA comprise a total of 30% of the NSPF calculations. This measure is aligned with values set forth by Nevada stakeholders — students must reach proficiency in order to be college- and career-ready.

Other Indicator

Personnel representing the LEAs including the State Charter School Authority expressed a strong desire to include a variety of non-academic performance indicators in the Nevada SPF and the Nevada core group concurred that some flexibility was conditionally warranted. Under the current NCLB accountability model, the SEA utilizes school-level average daily attendance (ADA) as the Other Indicator. The underlying premise is that higher attendance rates are positively correlated with higher levels of student engagement, healthier school climates, and ultimately higher levels of student achievement or academic growth.

So at the very least, any other performance indicator proposed for SEA approval and use by an

LEA would be required to demonstrate that the performance indicator show a moderate to strong correlation with student academic performance. Also, the SEA would expect the LEA to demonstrate that the alternative indicator represented a school wide measure. If survey results are proposed as an alternative performance indicator, the SEA would expect the LEA to provide a summary report of the results which would include an analysis of the responses that demonstrate the aforementioned relationship to student academic performance. The SEA would also insist that the alternative other indicator not replicate one of the required indicators.

The SEA will require the LEA to request approval for alternative other indicators. Prior to approval of any alternative indicator, the LEA will provide the SEA with a written report attesting to the reliability and validity of the survey instrument or measure proposed for use. The SEA expects the report to contain an analysis of trial results, evidence from other research studies, and other technical documentation. As a final note, the LEA will be required to annually reapply to use the alternative indicator and the SEA prefers that LEAs opting for alternative indicators to use the indicator over a number of years.

While the SEA is open to a variety of alternative other indicators, the SEA will not approve the use of an alternative indicator deemed to lack rigor or provide un-actionable data. To this end, the SEA developed a general "menu" of optional performance indicators from which an LEA may choose to use as the Other Indicator provided it meets the criteria specified above.

- Parent satisfaction surveys
- Student climate and safety surveys
- School discipline or school violence data
- ESEA assessment participation

Average daily attendance (ADA) has been a component of Nevada's accountability system in elementary and middle schools since 1997. As such, the SEA intends to calculate the 2011-2012 and 2012-13 Nevada SPF School Index Scores utilizing the school-level Student ADA as the Other Indicator. While ADA can certainly serve as an indicator of school climate, Nevada's LEAs have been actively engaged in determining even more meaningful indicators to measure school climate. Therefore, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, each LEA and State-sponsored charter school will have the option to replace ADA with other mission-specific indicators of student/family engagement. Such an approach allows LEA superintendents and locally elected boards of trustees to drive reform at the local level and to remain responsive to local priorities while still working to achieve the greater directionality and comparability expected in a statewide system. This approach is consistent with the theory of action supporting a balanced "loose-tight" orientation to local flexibility and statewide uniformity, and aligns with the anticipated direction of the State's system of evaluation for teachers and administrators articulated in Principle 3. As described earlier in this section of the application, for the NSPF, a "menu" of approved measurable options will be developed with LEA input and distributed in August of 2013. The "other indicator" comprises 10% of the NSPF calculations.

Nevada school districts assess students after 150 +/- 10 days of instruction over a fairly broad testing window. This year's testing window for the ESEA criterion referenced test ranged from March 20th to May 25th. As a result, schools and districts routinely assess approximately 98.5 percent of all students. It is unusual for any school to assess fewer than 95 percent of the students enrolled

at the time of testing, which is the minimum acceptable participation rate for the current ESEA accountability model.

The SEA proposes to maintain the minimum acceptable participation rate at 95 percent of all students enrolled at the time of testing. Occasionally, the SEA identifies instances in which a school might assess fewer than 95percent of students, and in these cases, the SEA calculates a two- or three-year uniform average of the participation rate under the current accountability model. The SEA proposes to continue this practice as a means to ensure that all schools are assessing at least 95 percent of all students over rolling three-year time periods.

The SEA contends that the current practice and that proposed are sufficient to ensure that all schools are meeting or exceeding the minimum acceptable participation criteria. If and when a school fails to meet the minimum threshold and cannot meet the two- or three-year uniform average rate of 95 percent, the SEA asserts that a participation issue must be addressed. In these instances, the SEA strongly believes that assigning the school the lowest 1-Star rating with the additional planning requirements and SEA/LEA oversight is sufficient to deter the possible practice of not testing certain students.

Elementary/Middle School Index

Table 2.A.4 below summarizes an index system that identifies points assigned to elementary and middle schools under the NSPF. A detailed description of the specific targets under the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) is described under Section 2.B.

Table 2.A.4 Elementary/Middle School Index

Elementary/Middle School Index (100 points)		
Growth (40 points)		
	Math	Reading
School Median Growth Percentile (MGP)	10	10
Overall % of Students Meeting Adequate Growth Percentile (AGP)	10	10
Status (30 points)		
Overall % of Students Meeting Proficiency Expectations	15	15
Gap (20 points)		
% of IEP, ELL, and FRL Students Meeting AGP	10	10
Average Daily Attendance (ADA) or Other State-Approved Indicator (10 points)		
Other Indicator	10	

NSPF for High Schools

While one of the fundamental components of the Nevada School Performance Framework in the elementary and middle school grades is reliance on measures of student growth, the high school

NSPF more centrally focuses on proficiency and graduation rates as a measure of student readiness for college and career success. Although not a major component, the high school SPF calculations do include a 10th grade growth performance indicator. According to Assembly Bill 288 End-of-Course examinations will be implemented in 2014-2015 to assess against college readiness standards (NVACS). As the assessment transition permits, Nevada will use growth data in high school based on the End-of-Course examinations. . High school performance measures include status, growth, gap, graduation, and college- and career-readiness. The need for coherence and alignment drives the State to ensure that growth proxies are attendant in the model. Accordingly, we currently include in the status measure both first time passing rates on the High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE), and subsequent passing rates for those students unable to pass the exams on their first administration. Status measures for the End-of-Course examinations will similarly include cumulative passing rates, with growth reintroduced as the transition permits.

Status

In order to maximize the number of students used to calculate the NSPF, high school assessment data include the State's High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE) and the Nevada Alternate Assessment (NAA) at grade 11. As described above, high school assessment data from the 2014-2015 End-of-Course examinations in English/Language Arts and Mathematics will be baseline data for the NSPF. Consistent with the current accountability system, schools are held accountable for only those students who were enrolled for the full academic year (i.e., those students who were continuously enrolled in a school from the official count day to the time of testing are included in the analyses). Data from the End-of-Course assessments will be evaluated at two points in time. Students who do not pass one or more of the assessments will be provided additional opportunities to participate on those examinations which they failed to pass. For the End-of-Course examinations, scores for students who qualify to take the EOCs will be "banked" until the 11th grade year. Consistent with the current accountability calculations, a cumulative proficiency rate is calculated for all students who are enrolled in the spring of their 11th grade year. Using both the cumulative and 11th grade measures will reinforce efforts to continue to focus resources on students unable to pass previously.

Relative to high school growth, the SEA had developed the ability to compute the 10th grade reading and mathematics SGPs. So in addition to the 10th and 11th grade proficiency rates, high schools also could earn points based on the 10th grade reading and mathematics SGPs. As illustrated in Table 2.A.5, the 10th grade proficiency rates in reading and mathematics for the "all students" group comprised 10 percent of the high school NSPF calculation, the cumulative 11th grade proficiency rates comprise an additional 10 percent,-and the 10th grade reading and mathematics SGPs comprise ten percent of the SPF School Index calculation. A similar process will be put in place for establishing growth measures for students assessed by the End-of-Course examinations.

Gap

High school proficiency gaps are identified as the difference between the subgroup proficiency rate and the average statewide performance for the "all students" group. The high school proficiency gap analyses are conducted separately for ELA and mathematics. Nevada is committed to reducing performance gaps among each of the lowest-performing subgroups identified earlier in this section and close monitoring of proficiency gaps is an integral step. Therefore, subgroup or supergroup (as applicable) performance around proficiency targets in reading and mathematics comprise 10% of the NSPF. This measure aligns to the stated value of fostering college- and career- readiness for *all*

students. Gap measures also support the contribution of data to support root cause analysis on characteristics of school success, a fundamental reason for making the paradigm shift targeted through the flexibility afforded under this waiver opportunity.

Graduation

The graduating class of 2011 represents the first year the SEA utilized the National Governors Association (NGA) Cohort graduation rate. High school graduation rates are a critical component of the NSPF, which captures and reports the data in two essential ways. First, the NGA Cohort Graduation rate is calculated for the "all students" group within each school, and comprises 15% of the high school NSPF calculation. High school graduation gaps are defined as the difference between each subgroup graduation rate and the average statewide graduation rate. This analysis comprises an additional 15% of the NSPF and is calculated for each of the subgroups identified at the beginning of this section. Where the subgroup or supergroup graduation rate is less than the state average, a negative value results.

The SEA values the reduction of gaps in the graduation rates of our subgroups in the NSPF. Baseline data from the 2010-2011 school year were used to determine the subgroup graduation gap. Maximum index points are earned by schools demonstrating subgroup graduation gaps at or above the 95th percentile of schools for each subgroup. These index points are earned in inverse relation to the size of the graduation gap.

College- and Career-Readiness

As described in Principle 1, Nevada's current definition of "college ready" is closely aligned with the requirements for the Advanced Diploma. Therefore, percentages of students who earn an advanced diploma will result in 4% of the NSPF calculation, while percentages of students who are required to enroll in remedial courses in Nevada colleges and universities will comprise an additional 4% of the calculation. Demonstrating improvement on participation and performance in Advanced Placement courses are another 4% of this component, as is increasing participation and performance on ACT and SAT exams. These are illustrated in Table 2.A.5. Nevada's indicators of college readiness will adapt as definitions for "college and career ready" are revised, and additional reliable and valid measures of college- and career-readiness will be included.

Other Indicator

Credit attainment early in high school can set the stage for student success throughout the high school experience. Therefore, measuring the percentage of students who complete 9th grade with at least five credits comprises 4% of the high school NSPF.

Average daily attendance (ADA) has been a component of Nevada's accountability system as a back-up to graduation rates in high schools since 2002. As such, the SEA intends to calculate the 2011-12 and 2012-13 Nevada SPF School Index Scores utilizing the school-level Student ADA as the Other Indicator. While ADA can certainly serve as an indicator of school climate, Nevada's LEAs have been actively engaged in determining even more meaningful indicators to measure school climate. As with elementary and middle schools, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, each LEA and State-sponsored charter school will have the option to replace ADA with other mission-specific indicators of student/family engagement. Delaying the availability of the additional options under the "menu" concept until 2013-2014 will allow the state to (1) ensure that the options

available to an LEA are strongly empirically based and (2) to put into place structures such that the data for any given option will be collected and reported in ways that are rigorous and adhere to statistically sound methodology. The NDE will engage the state's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for assistance in developing the menu of options, as well as in guiding the development of a process for districts to request any given option from the menu. Just as in elementary and middle schools, a "menu" of approved measurable options will be developed with LEA input and will be distributed in August, 2013. This "other indicator" comprises 10% of the NSPF calculations.

High School Index

Table 2.A.5 below summarizes an index system that identifies points assigned to high schools under the NSPF. A detailed description of the specific targets under the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) is described under Section 2.B.

Table 2.A.5 High School Index

High School Index (100 points)		
Status/Growth (30 points)		
	Math	Reading
Overall % of 10th Grade Students Meeting Proficiency Expectations	5	5
Cumulative % of 11th Grade Students Meeting Proficiency Expectations	5	5
School Median Growth Percentile for grade 10 (MGP)	5	5
Gap (10 points)		
Cumulative % of 11th Grade IEP, ELL, FRL Proficiency Gap	5	5
Graduation (30 points)		
Overall Graduation Rate	15	
Graduation Rate Gap for IEP, ELL, and FRL Students	15	
College and Career Readiness (16 points)		
% of Students in NV Colleges Requiring Remediation	4	
% of Students Earning an Advanced Diploma	4	
AP Participation/Proficiency	4	
ACT/SAT Participation/Proficiency	4	
Other (14 points)		
Average Daily Attendance (ADA) or Other State-Approved Indicator	10	

% of 9th Grade Students who are Credit Deficient	4

Transparency and Communication of the NSPF

The Nevada stakeholder group assembling the various pieces of the school performance framework was unified in their desire to include multiple measures of achievement (status), progress (growth), gap, and other indicators. While all were eager to include multiple measures, few were willing to discard their favored performance indicators. As a result, the SEA was compelled to include a representative combination of performance indicators; the SPF is complex at first glance but is also readily understood shortly after examining the model more carefully.

The SEA core group has engaged stakeholder groups throughout the process of developing this request in the form of formal presentations and informal dialogue at the superintendent's monthly meetings, the Nevada Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs), the Nevada School Board Association, and the Nevada Education Association to name but a few. The SEA is planning and preparing for a "Data Summit" event in fall 2012 for school and LEA personnel, RPDP staff, and other personnel for the purpose of formally "rolling out" the Nevada SPF.

While the SEA is designing reports, conducting trial runs of the SPF Report Generator, and conducting analyses using the 2011-12 assessment data, plans for a spring 2013 SPF Rollout for a larger and diverse stakeholder group are already underway. The focus of the 2013 SPF Rollout will be an intensive hands-on workshop for a variety of end users. The event will coincide with the 2013 legislative session and the SEA anticipates the attendance of elected state officials.

The SEA has prepared guidance and technical documents for explaining how the school index scores are derived or calculated and how the point attributions relate to the performance indicators. Once finalized, reviewed, and approved for distribution, these materials will be made available to the public through the SEA website. The SEA previously posted a series of Growth Model documents to the website in language understandable to all to educate the public, and a similar approach will be taken for the Nevada SPF guidance document and training manuals.

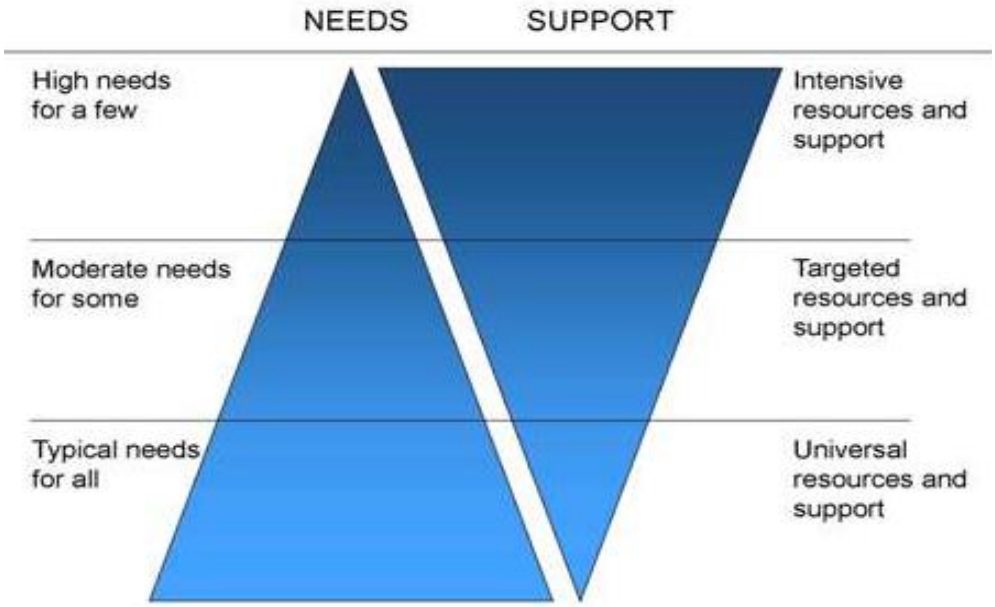
School Supports

Rooted in the premise put forward by Fullan (2011) with regard to the right drivers for whole system reform, Nevada's approach to leveraging school success is constructed with a focus on capacity building. This concept is prominent in the theory of action driving the development of Nevada's entire next generation accountability system, and particularly charts the course for expansion of the State's differentiated system of school supports and recognition. Through this capacity-building system, Nevada will create a unified, comprehensive approach to accountability which aligns state and federal interventions, resources, and supports to schools and districts in response to demonstrated data-based needs, and provides accompanying rewards for schools with demonstrated success.

Nevada is committed to building upon an existing infrastructure of differentiated supports to enhance and refine the statewide system. Using the conceptual framework of Response to Intervention (RTI) to provide scaffolded supports and autonomy within a multi-level approach, Nevada's system of support will include the following key components:

- A statewide school performance framework that emphasizes both growth to a standard, normative growth, status, and the over-arching importance of preparing all students for college- and career-readiness,
- An understanding of the policies and practices in place at the school that influence the school's performance, as determined through conduct of research-based needs assessment tools and processes
- Implementation of a uniform school improvement planning process for schools, to include tiered support from school districts
- State-sanctioned interventions for schools most in need of assistance in accordance with existing State regulations, including fiscal Title I resources where applicable
- Engagement in leadership development for turnaround principals, as well as the district and State administrators who support school turnaround efforts,
- Comprehensive monitoring of school improvement efforts through diagnostic school reviews supported by expanded use of the State's eNOTE system (i.e., WestEd Tracker)
- The establishment of program quality indicators to assess system success
- Rewards for success, including public recognition, pay for performance, and financial incentives, as well as flexibility in decision making on budgeting and use of allocations, and implementation of core instructional efforts
- Highly effective professional development including coaching, mentoring, and model site partnerships to transform instructional and leadership practices at the site and district level

In order to operationalize these concepts, Nevada believes that matching support to greatest needs serves to lift overall performance, especially in schools with significant needs. The following chart, which will look familiar to individuals familiar with an RTI orientation, demonstrates the State's paradigm for supporting schools to reach targeted goals.



Nevada will include all districts and schools in this comprehensive and coherent system of support and intervention, which will allocate federal and State resources so that schools in the greatest need receive the greatest support (or strongest intervention). However, as evidenced in the theory of action driving this system, issues of capacity are critically important and must be addressed. Nevada's economic downturn has been among the worst in the nation, resulting in substantial budget cuts at the local and State level. As a result, State policymakers must be very strategic with resources, targeting allocations in response to data-driven decisions. Correspondingly, the State must leverage existing capacity where it does exist, and work to replicate effective strategies that are homegrown. A conceptual foundation that is a strong match for Nevada's unique context and philosophical paradigm is that of Managed Performance Empowerment (MPE) (McAdams, 2006).

Within an MPE approach, greater degrees of autonomy are provided to schools with demonstrated achievement of targets, and increasing levels of managed support are wrapped around schools with demonstrated needs for improvement. This conceptual framework, which supports a loose-tight relationship with school districts, has proven effective in the past by allowing for a concentration of resources where the identified needs exist. This loose-tight approach can be supported both in identifying school needs as well as in delivering supports and rewarding success. Dependent on level of autonomy earned, schools may be empowered to engage in self-assessment (versus supported assessment), independent school improvement planning and empowered implementation, using the systems and tools provided through the statewide system of support. For those schools that have a more urgent need to improve and yet still have some internal capacity, assistance may be provided in their use of the same systems and tools provided by the State, but with support through on-site work and/or web-based support, to include monitoring for implementation. For schools that are significantly struggling, an external team will be leveraged to conduct the diagnosis and provide side-by-side assistance in developing and implementing improvement plans, with strong support in monitoring implementation of approved plans.

The table below depicts the State's orientation to a differentiated system of supports for schools under the managed performance empowerment framework. The NDE will partner with school districts to recognize high performing schools, will provide latitude to districts with regard to addressing schools in the middle, and will specify how districts must apply targeted interventions with their lowest performing schools. Table 2.A.6 illustrates how flexibility follows results. Following this table, more details are provided on each of the elements within the differentiated system.

Table 2.A.6 Recognition, Supports, and Interventions

NSPF	Recognition, Supports, and Interventions within Nevada's Managed Performance Empowerment (MPE) Continuum
5-Star Schools	• Autonomy in school improvement planning, creating a 5-Star Performance Plan • Flexible use of allocations within parameters of school board policies • Site based decision making on use of core instructional materials • Pay for performance/financial incentives • Public recognition
4-Star Schools	• Autonomy in school improvement planning with school district review, creating a 4-Star Performance Plan • Negotiated flexibility between school district and school in use of allocations

	• Site based decision making on use of core instructional materials • Pay for performance/financial incentives • Public recognition
3-Star Schools	• Participation in statewide Student Achievement Gap Elimination (SAGE) school improvement planning process, creating a 3-Star Improvement Plan • Negotiated flexibility in use of allocations • Negotiated flexibility between school district and school with core instructional materials • Optional visits to model sites • Public recognition, when appropriate (for example even though total school performance may not be exceptional, there will be schools in which specific interventions have demonstrated improvement among one or more subpopulations and these will be recognized and promoted to support scale up in other schools as well as to reinforce success at the recognized school)
2-Star Schools	• Participation in statewide SAGE school improvement planning process, creating a 2-Star Improvement Plan • Required engagement of district leaders to support school in uniform school improvement planning and monitoring of implementation through the NDE's established eNOTE system (i.e., WestEd Tracker platform) • Prescribed use of core instructional materials • Prescribed scheduling • Collaboration with districts and local educational associations to negotiate collective bargaining agreements and engage national resources for school turnaround • Required visits to model sites and provision of embedded professional development that aligns with strategies, including coaching and mentoring if determined necessary through data analysis • Differentiated supports negotiated by the NDE and the LEA, with a focus on capacity building of school and LEA educational leaders
1-Star Schools	• Participation in statewide SAGE school improvement planning process, creating a 1-Star Improvement Plan • Required engagement of district leaders to support school in uniform school improvement planning and monitoring of implementation through the NDE's established eNOTE system (i.e., WestEd Tracker platform) • Prescribed use of core instructional materials • Prescribed scheduling • Collaboration with districts and local educational associations to negotiate collective bargaining agreements and engage national resources for school turnaround • Required visits to model sites and provision of embedded professional development that aligns with strategies, including coaching and mentoring if determined necessary through data analysis • Differentiated supports negotiated by the NDE and the LEA, with a focus on capacity building of school and LEA educational leaders, including engagement

	in University of Virginia school turnaround leadership program • Personnel changes including teaching faculty and/or leadership as recommended by LEA and approved by the NDE • Imposed turnaround principles • Reopening of schools using different delivery models • School closure based on chronic failure

Core Instructional Supports

School-Level Response to Intervention (RTI) Systems

Nevada utilizes a tiered system of support that includes universal supports for all, as well as targeted and intensive supports and interventions for the lowest performing schools and students. In this way, need drives the plan, and the plan drives the allocation of resources. Resources and supports prescribed will be based on the identified needs in struggling schools, needs for academic achievement including growth for individual students and subgroups, and the research on effective interventions and systems that will yield the greatest gains in student learning and growth. Core instructional supports include an expectation for school districts to implement efficacious Response to Intervention (RTI) systems at the school level to support individual student needs through the delivery of learner-centered instruction. Accordingly, schools will be supported by their districts and by the NDE to establish or enhance (where they exist), RTI systems to align to the framework established by statewide stakeholders, and to include the following components: Universal Screening, Progress Monitoring, Multi-Level Prevention Structures, and Data-Based Decision Making. These tenets are in line with the work of the National Center for Response to Intervention.

Statewide Literacy Initiative

Through multiple systems, innovations, and professional development reform efforts, which will be scaled-up using funds from grants such as the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant, Nevada can successfully implement literacy reform on a large scale. School districts funded under this grant will identify underperforming schools, sub-groups, and students in need of targeted interventions and resources, including students with limited English proficiency and students with special needs. Funded districts will develop needs assessments that include data from literacy inventories and statewide assessments to determine the level of support needed for each school and student, ensuring that all students are impacted, particularly Priority, Focus, and other Title I schools.

Over the next three years, Nevada LEAs will receive support for educational reform through the *Nevada Striving Readers* initiative that will align directly to the NSLP and will include:

- *Curricula and instruction materials* (including those which incorporate technology and early language development) that (a) align to NVACS and Nevada Pre-K Standards, (b) adhere to principles of effective instruction, and (c) incorporate technology with universal design.
- *A coherent computer-based assessment system* that includes: (a) valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring measures that are aligned to NVACS; (b) easy access to and use of data; and (c) accommodations for students with special needs.
- *Job-embedded professional development* provided by implementation specialists/literacy coaches or mentors assigned to each school whose primary duties will be to train and support teachers in (a) implementation of specified curricula and instructional materials with a high degree of fidelity; (b) all of the components of effective literacy instruction; (c) use of specified assessment protocols and resulting data to support instructional decisions; and (d) how to

use instructional technology to effect systemic and effective improvement in teaching and learning.

- *Data-Based Decision-Making (DBDM) Literacy Teams* in each school to: (a) support continuous improvement; (b) monitor program implementation and outcomes at the student, classroom, grade, and school levels; and (c) identify professional development needs.
- *Multi-leveled, evidence-based intervention and remediation programs* based on student needs that are informed by continual monitoring of data documented student progress.

Coaching And Mentoring

Coaching and mentoring opportunities provided to school personnel are crucial to improving student learning. Nevada's two large urban districts have mentoring systems in place for teachers new to the classroom, district, or a new specialty area that they have not previously taught. Local results have shown tremendous benefit from the implementation of these support systems. The NDE has bolstered the systems in both Clark and Washoe to ensure that special education teachers — who are often the most difficult to recruit, train, and retain — receive focused mentoring and support to help ensure positive outcomes for students with disabilities. The NDE also established a statewide system of support through the use of eMSS – eMentoring for Student Success, which has made mentoring available for special education teachers in rural districts where no formal mentoring systems have previously been established. The State is exploring the possibility of extending the eMSS system to teachers of mathematics and science as well.

Additional sources of instructional coaching and support exist under targeted district initiatives. With support from the NDE, six districts have adopted the Instructional Consultation Teams (IC Teams) approach to provide focused support for educators to assist them in assessing student need, differentiating and providing targeted instruction that is student-centered, and engaging in progress monitoring. Other districts have implemented different models of response to intervention systems to target similar goals for teacher support that increases student outcomes.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol – or SIOP – Model is also fairly well established in districts across Nevada. Professional development in the SIOP Model helps teachers plan and deliver lessons that allow English language learners to acquire academic knowledge as they develop English language proficiency. The NDE has increased the level of technical assistance being provided to school districts to support their implementation of this proven practice for ELL students.

In addition, implementation specialists and school-based coaches are in place in a few districts across the State to support high quality teaching by continuously coaching peers in their content areas. These individuals have proven most valuable when provided with intensive professional development in both academic content, pedagogical approaches – particularly with regard to differentiation for diverse learners, and classroom-based coaching strategies. In districts with systems for school-based coaches or implementation specialists, they will be utilized to provide assistance to identify teachers needing support to become better instructors in the classroom, with various indicators used to measure teacher and student progress and determine the need for peer coaching assistance. Current measures include classroom observations, leadership supervisory monitoring scripts, and student data, with teachers also able to refer themselves for coaching assistance. As part of the state's commitment to increasing capacity, successful practices will be identified, studied, and scaled up through scientific means that best support implementation with

fidelity.

School Improvement Planning and Implementation
For schools 4- and 5-Star schools, greater degrees of autonomy will be granted for school improvement planning and implementation. Schools classified as 1-Stars, 2-Stars, or 3-Stars, will engage in the statewide Student Achievement Gap Elimination (SAGE) School Improvement Planning process. Comprehensive school improvement planning, based on valid and reliable data regarding practices for curriculum and instruction, assessment and accountability, and leadership, serve to determine the specific actions needed to increase student growth and proficiency. For those schools in the lowest levels of performance, an in-depth review of their plan will be conducted by district personnel, with additional support from the State, as needed, and detailed feedback will be provided regarding the appropriate supports and incentives needed at the school level. Resources will not flow to the school until the improvement plan is approved.

Through the SAGE process, schools, with support from district and NDE staff or designees will:

- Summarize information about the school
- Clarify overall purpose
- Review performance indicators, measures, and expectations
- Gather and organize relevant data
- Conduct an audit of processes in place at the school with regard to curriculum and instruction, assessment and accountability, and leadership (using the State's NCCAT-S process described below, or another district-proposed process approved in advance by the NDE)
- Analyze trends and identify needs in each performance indicator
- Engage in root cause analysis and undergo an inquiry process to identify empirically based solutions to match established needs
- Create the data narrative
- Establish annual targets and interim measures
- Identify major improvement strategies and implementation benchmarks
- Monitor progress (at least quarterly) through interim measures, while paying attention to implementation benchmarks

The performance labels reflected on the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) determine the type of improvement plan that must be implemented. These determinations are the trigger for a differentiated system of recognition, accountability, and support. The lowest performers, those on a Focus Improvement Plan or Priority/Turnaround Plan, will be required to implement specific interventions and will receive the greatest attention from the NDE, including required state approval of the plan prior to implementation as well as targeted State supports. Reward schools will be given the autonomy to develop performance plans in accordance with the direction of site-based leaders, and will be recognized and serve as exemplars for scaling up successful practices. In keeping with the loose-tight earned autonomy paradigm of Nevada's system, districts will exercise discretion in determining the frequency and rigor with which Performance plans are examined. The majority of schools — those in the middle — will be required to develop and implement Improvement Plans, and will receive universal supports from school districts and the NDE. These improvement plans will be reviewed against a statewide rubric that will be developed as part of the enhancement to the SAGE process, through the collaboration of school, district, and State school

improvement leaders. Districts may choose to layer on additional considerations to address local context and priorities established by district leaders and local boards of trustees. Additionally, one of the benefits of the enhanced SAGE process will be the use of one foundational planning template for school improvement plans. In addition to the rubric for assessing school improvement plans, stakeholders from across the State will also help to shape the contents and appearance of the plan template itself.

Differentiated Supports Negotiated with School Districts and the NDE

Nevada has engaged in targeted reform in the past three years to differentiate supports to schools that have been identified in need of improvement. When NCLB was created, Nevada adopted parallel requirements for non-Title I schools with regard to classifications and consequences. From 2003-2009, all Nevada schools that had failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for three or more consecutive years received the same consequence: a School Support Team, with a designated School Support Team Leader. In the 2009 Legislative Session, the NDE, in partnership with Nevada school districts, worked with legislative leaders in education reform to revise the statute addressing school supports and consequences. Those statutory changes authorized the State Board of Education to create and adopt regulations that allow for a differentiated approach to the types of supports a school receives when it failed to meet Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs). The one constant element that remains is a requirement for schools, in their third year of identification as needing improvement (which equates to five years of failure to make AMOs), to conduct the Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Schools (NCCAT-S).

The NCCAT-S and accompanying support documents provide the tools and framework for analyzing school policies and practices in three primary areas: Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Accountability, and Leadership. The NCCAT-S is built upon a meta-analysis of the research on school improvement, and was created by the NDE in collaboration with school districts, and with support from RMC Research via the Southwest Comprehensive Center (SWCC) at WestEd as well as the Center for Innovation and Improvement (CII). The NCCAT-S has proven beneficial in schools' and districts' efforts to identify schools' successes and needs. From this rich set of data, root cause analysis is possible to generate information useful for improvement planning and implementation.

Under the State's current differentiated system of school supports, these data, along with quantitative data such as AMOs, student growth, local assessment data, etc., then set the stage for school districts to propose to the NDE an appropriate, targeted intervention to assist the school in improving. School districts are required to work with their targeted schools to determine what the data are saying is needed in order to increase student achievement at the school. This system is grounded in the idea that if schools had the internal expertise or other necessary resources to succeed, they would be doing so independently, and that in order to improve, focused support is necessary. Therefore, a framework has been created which specifies the interventions that a school district can request in order to support the school in growing their student achievement. School districts must support their schools to analyze their NCCAT-S data and determine which of the following interventions is most appropriate to meet this goal, at which time a proposal is submitted to the NDE requesting one or more of the following types of support for the school. The NDE works with districts to ensure the proper match between needs and interventions, and in the past, has required different interventions when the data didn't align to the district's originally proposed intervention(s).

1. Focused technical assistance

2. Delivery of job-embedded professional development, including coaching and mentoring
3. Creation and operation of a school support team
4. Acquisition of targeted materials or programs
5. Resources to employ additional personnel to provide additional instruction
6. Permission for the school district to more actively assist the school in conducting NCCAT-S, or to access technical expertise to conduct the audit with the schools

Upon receipt of the requests — the timelines for which are established in regulations — the NDE analyzes the request, inclusive of supporting data, and either grants permission, along with fiscal resources available to Title I schools, to implement the supports, requests more information, or works with the district to engage a different intervention than is proposed if the selected intervention is not well-supported by the data. The NDE does possess the regulatory authority to implement any other differentiated corrective action, consequence or sanction, or any combination thereof, that the Department determines is appropriate for the public school based upon the results of the comprehensive audit and any other data the Department deems relevant. Results from the first two years of operation under this differentiated system of supports and consequences show improvement in student achievement at targeted schools, resulting from improvement in collaboration, leadership, and/or instructional practices at those schools. Nevada will continue to implement the targeted interventions described above within its differentiated support system, and under this waiver flexibility, expand opportunities to address schools' and districts' unique circumstances.

Stakeholders agree that maintaining a differentiated system that is built in response to the identified needs of the school is conceptually sound. This orientation towards a system in which there is an established framework and yet latitude for the selection of choices from among that menu, is consistent with other elements of the State's next generation accountability system. This approach also honors the State's value of a loose-tight paradigm for respective state and district control and flexibility.

Targeted Supports for Focus and Priority Schools

As guided by current learning through the School Improvement Grant (SIG) work, the NDE is committed to partnering with districts and external technical assistance experts toward the development of turnaround leaders who possess requisite competencies to engage in rapid whole school reform. These partnerships will include efforts for:

- Building transformative turnaround leadership that includes:
  - Goal-setting and planning
  - Resource allocation and management
  - Engagement with the school community to ensure active involvement in the turnaround process
  - Recognition of improvement
- Promoting a school-wide, data-focused culture to:
  - Understand student needs
  - Devise solutions
  - Inform decision making
  - Monitor impact of programs
  - Modify and make adjustments as needed
  - Guide continuous improvement

- Improving instructional effectiveness by:
    - Developing a common core of practice
    - Promoting reflective practice
    - Promoting research-based instructional strategies
    - Differentiating instruction and targeting students who need extra support
- Improving school climate and culture:
    - Address high absences and tardiness
    - Promote behavior management programs
    - Increase parent and community engagement

Empowerment and Recognition for 4- and 5-Star Schools
As inferred above in Table 2.A.6, under the 4- and 5-Star School classifications, districts will continue to have the flexibility to create an autonomous zone to empower schools that are academically successful. Schools in these zones will be supported through development of district-level policies that enable greater latitude with respect to budgeting, staffing, and program design, and correspondingly less oversight. Input from site administrators clearly indicates they welcome greater autonomy in exchange for greater accountability for improved student results. Critical decisions affecting teaching and learning should be made at the school level by those who directly impact student success. When all stakeholders have a voice that is heard, the resulting decisions are more likely to be successful. This thinking aligns with the values of State stakeholders, who are guided by the recent work of Fullan (2011) as well as long-standing research from Herzberg (1959), both of whom encourage paying attention to leveraging intrinsic motivators within a comprehensive system. Considerations such as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement are valued and validated in the continuum described above.

Schools will be motivated for continuous improvement using multiple strategies. First, the NDE will publicly recognize schools that exceed performance expectations and foster capacity building to support additional means by which other schools can learn from the success of high performing schools, including partnering low performing schools with reward schools. Second, through a loose-tight balance of responsibility, districts will have the authority to grant autonomy to schools predicated on high performance and growth. Additionally, the Nevada Legislature in 2011 mandated the development of pay for performance systems. Through the alignment of the school accountability model with administrator and teacher evaluation systems, monetary incentives related to student performance will be a component in supporting continuous improvement. Collaboration among the NDE and the Nevada State Education Association as well as among LEAs and local unions will take place to negotiate recognition and rewards for teachers, and the same will occur respectively with administrative associations in regards to principals.

Fiscal Considerations
Federal resources available to support implementation of recognition, supports, and consequences for Title I schools that fall along the above spectrum include Title I School Improvement 1003(a) and 1003(g)-SIG funds as well as LEA set asides previously mandated to support Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and school choice costs.

Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and School Choice
Under this waiver request, the NDE is seeking flexibility with regard to the existing requirements that schools identified as needing improvement under the AYP specifications offer supplemental

education services (SES) and public school choice. School districts must currently set aside 20% of funds to support these provisions. As Nevada moves towards an orientation of allocating resources to support the rapid turnaround and improvement of our Priority and Focus Schools, we believe that these mandatory set-asides as currently required under NCLB are not well-aligned with our theory of action. This theory speaks to providing firm expectations for outcomes and simultaneously greater flexibility at the district level with regard to allocation of resources to ensure that targeted outcomes are reached. Mandating the use of funds for SES and choice from a federal level fails to take into account local contexts and efforts to use resources to meet the needs of identified schools.

With regard to SES, districts should have the flexibility to use resources in a manner that is consistent with the overarching purpose of ESEA (namely to ensure that all students are college and career ready, to promote annual academic growth for all students toward this goal, to eradicate subgroup performance gaps, and to build human capital and the capacity of systems to achieve these ambitious aims). This shift in resources could support, yet not be limited to enhancing the degree, quality, and/or type of instructional time and/or expanding instructional time for students during or after the school day to expand instructional time for students during or after the school day. The current SES approach diverts funds from growing the capacity of site level personnel to deliver effective instruction, which is one of the tenets of this waiver request and a fundamental underpinning of Nevada's redesigned accountability system.

The expectation and obligation should be that school districts receiving federal funds that would no longer be earmarked for the specific purpose of SES, must transparently apply the funds in a manner that is designed to lead to greater student academic success, and that the districts are responsible for accounting for the use of these funds. This would help create even greater accountability than currently exists under NCLB, in which no tracking system currently exists that requires qualified SES providers to document the manner and effectiveness of SES funds.

With regard to choice, it is important to note that depending upon the configuration of a district, significant transportation resources are sometimes spent on the provision of school choice. The use of resources towards transportation is not the most effective use approach and in fact deters the use of such funds from a focus on increasing instructional capacity at low performing schools. Additionally problematic is the time spent at the district level to map out "what if" scenarios in order to make projections about personnel and staffing allocations if parents choose to access choice.

Issues associated with choice and SES become even more problematic in light of the timing for the release of statewide assessment data and the associated timing for making determinations about school performance. Districts are forced to project which schools may need to offer choice and supplemental education services, to further this speculation to make such offers to parents, and then adjust plans as necessary, once the data are validated and the final decisions on performance are made. This sequence can be confounding to the public and does not engender confidence in the educational process.

Focused Attention on Closing Achievement Gaps

Nevada's accountability system includes rewards, supports, and corrective actions tied to performance, wherein all schools and student groups within schools are held to both status and

growth expectations. Although all schools and student groups are expected to improve and grow, status improvement and growth expectations are accelerated for those schools and student groups performing at relatively low levels. By approaching the work in this way, pervasive achievement gaps within and between schools can be eradicated at the same time as the system as a whole continuously improves.

Also relevant is the differentiated system of supports and consequences required through State regulations and described earlier in this application. Through the NCCAT-S process, which has included the analysis of student proficiency on statewide assessments, and will also include growth measures in the coming school year, the NDE and Nevada districts are able to pinpoint the student groups that are not achieving at targeted rates or levels. Accordingly, differentiated supports can be leveraged in response to data-driven decisions. As a result, a school that for example, has demonstrated challenges in reaching performance targets for special education students, yet no other subpopulation issues, can receive support to increase outcomes that are targeted at meeting the needs of students with disabilities. This system supports targeted responses in which identified pervasive deficiencies with respect to a single student group (e.g., African American students' math performance) drives targeted corrective action (e.g., extended learning time in math for African American students). Additionally, and consistent with the differentiation described in other sections of this application, focused support, intervention, and corrective action will be developed and applied for ELL students and students with disabilities. The NDE will enhance existing and create new tools and processes to support districts in adopting, implementing, and scaling up proven practices. School districts will have the latitude to adopt practices that meet the technical specifications required by the State and that are appropriate for the student groups and the context of the local school district. The practices and strategies adopted by school districts should be articulated as part of their problem solving frameworks (e.g. RTI; IC Teams) and be described in their district improvement plans.

If over time a school district fails to appropriately support its schools and/or fails to monitor the improvement of its schools, the State reserves the latitude to authorize the specific use of targeted interventions at its discretion. For example, the following strategies have been proven effective with English learners and may be leveraged to support growth in student performance: reading academies, literacy specialists and coaching teams, providing content area teachers with differentiated professional development to increase their knowledge of helping students read and comprehend text in science, social studies, and mathematics, models of sheltered instruction, and providing technical assistance to early childhood educators.

Targeted strategies to increase results for students with disabilities might include: co-teaching models, inclusion in core content classes with effective and highly effective general education teachers who are supported to scaffold instructional content, reading academies and literacy specialists and coaching teams. Other targeted efforts that have been shown to be relevant include analyses of the curricular and instructional materials available to students with disabilities and to special education personnel at given school sites, the underlying beliefs of personnel with regard to the capacity that they actually believe such students can learn, and the culture that exists in the school to support constructive learning. Toward these ends, school-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) systems can be tremendously beneficial. More details about the additional, specific interventions that will be undertaken as part of Nevada's differentiated system of support for focus schools are described in Section 2E of this application.

Consideration for Charter Schools and Sponsors
In 1997 Nevada passed law allowing for the formation of charter schools. As of today, 31 charter schools educate roughly 17,000 or 3.8% of Nevada students. According to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, for the 2011-2012 school year, Nevada's charter school law was ranked 20th from the best (of 42 states ranked), earning 111 of a possible 208 points – a significant improvement from the prior year. The Nevada Legislature's creation of the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) as a State-wide sponsor of charter schools is credited by the Alliance as a major contributing factor to Nevada's improvement in the ranking over prior years. Nevada statute allows Higher Education Institutions, Local Education Agencies (School Districts), and the State Public Charter School Authority to sponsor charter schools.

Nevada is committed to the proposed ESEA Flexibility and will classify all schools and identify Priority and Focus schools without regard to their charter/non- charter status. Nevada is committed to the development and application of a system of differential recognition, accountability, and support. Nevada also recognizes that the charter school concept is built upon a fundamental quid pro quo – autonomy from certain statue/regulation in exchange for accountability for student learning. Therefore, nothing in this plan or its implementation shall interfere with the autonomy and accountability of charter schools in the State as defined by Nevada charter school law and regulations. Specifically, this plan shall be implemented in a manner that protects the authority of charter school sponsors to close low-performing charter schools under the timeframes and according to the performance expectations in their charter agreements and under current Nevada law. The identification of a charter school as falling within the category of Priority or Focus schools under the provisions of this flexibility application, and the subsequent improvement planning and implementation of any improvement plan by such a school, shall not be used as evidence to delay or avoid closure if the school is failing to meet the terms of its charter agreement.

Equitable Distribution of Teachers (EDT)
The NDE will continue to provide technical assistance to districts where there is inequitable distribution of "experienced" teachers. These districts will continue to analyze, revise, and submit their EDT plans to the NDE to ensure the strategies that are designed and implemented actually result in increasing equitable distribution of teachers and closing the achievement gap.

District Engagement in Needs Assessment, Improvement Planning, and Implementation
Stakeholders in Nevada have agreed that schools are the primary unit of change for increasing outcomes in student achievement. The role of the school district is critical in supporting the school to improve. The framework described at the top of this section demonstrates various ways in which district leaders will engage in negotiated processes with school leaders along the continuum of autonomy and managed performance. In addition, there may be instances in which an analysis of school district policies, procedures, and practices is needed in order to determine LEA capacity to support school improvement. Such a need might be evidenced by a disproportionately higher number of schools that are classified as 3-Star schools or lower rather than just a percentage of an LEA's schools classified as such. Numbers and percentages are difficult to determine with finality due to the variability of district size with regard to numbers of schools. In Clark County, there are more than 300 schools whereas in some of our very small districts, there are four or fewer schools. To demonstrate how this might play out, consider this example: an LEA with a total of six schools might have two of those schools identified as 3-Star or lower, while a similarly-sized LEA might

only have one such school classified as Level or below. The proportions for these two LEAs would be 2:6 (1/3) and 1:6 (1/6) respectively. An LEA with 90 schools would need 15 of those schools to be identified as Level 3 or lower to reach the 1:6 ratio, and almost 30 of those 90 to be in 3- Star or lower to match a 2:6 ratio. The LEAs with the smaller numbers of total schools overall may need a more school-focused solution when a small proportion of its schools struggle as opposed to an LEA with a larger n of schools. When a Nevada school district has a disproportionately higher number of schools classified in Level 3 or lower, the NDE will provide technical assistance to the LEA to implement the Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Districts (NCCAT-D). Similar to the tools and processes established for schools with the NCCAT-S, the NCCAT-D is a research-based mechanism for evaluating district practices with regard to Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Accountability, and Leadership. Conduct of the NCCAT-D provides a rich set of data to inform district improvement planning efforts.

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

Option A	**Option B**
☒ The SEA includes student achievement only on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.	☐ If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must: • provide the percentage of students in the "all students" group that performed at the proficient level on the State's most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and • include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.

N/A

2.B SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.

Option A	**Option B**	**Option C**
☐ Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. • Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	☐ Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. • Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	☒ Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups. • Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs. • Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below. • Provide a link to the State's report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8)

Nevada is proposing a method of accountability that is educationally sound, that promotes ambitious and achievable expectations for all students, teachers, schools, and districts, that provides the support necessary to build system capacity, that seeks out and rewards success and strives to learn from it, and seeks out an identifies areas where improvement is necessary. The cornerstone of the system is built around the measurement of student academic growth and achievement. And the system values other measurable quantities that are directly and indirectly associated with student achievement.

This section will provide the point values associated with the NSPF, as well as additional detail concerning Annual Measurable Objectives for ELA and Mathematics.

NSPF Index Tables

Nevada stakeholders engaged in vigorous debates not only over the derivation of points from growth versus status but also over weighting of points in different categories toward the school index score. In order to bring about consensus on the issue of weighting of points between categories, the SEA calculated school index scores under differing weighting scenarios. Only after carefully reviewing the results brought about under varying weighting scenarios was the stakeholder group able to reach consensus on the issue of distribution of points by category.

One of the unintended consequences of the current NCLB accountability model is the overemphasis of intervention toward a small group of students rather than whole school improvement; focusing herculean improvement efforts and supports toward a handful of "bubble students" for the sole purpose of making Safe Harbor and ultimately making AYP. The SEA deliberately sought to create and implement a school index analysis intended to focus attention and efforts on the whole school and where the supports were most needed.

As a means to incentivize and shine the light on subgroup performance, the SEA proposes to identify Focus schools on the basis of the schools' subgroup gap subtotaled points. For elementary and middle schools, this means closely monitoring the reading and mathematics performance of IEP, LEP, and FRL students, and for high school increasing the graduation rates for the same subgroups. Any school ignoring subgroup gaps will soon find itself identified as a Focus school and subject to higher levels of intervention and scrutiny by the LEA and SEA. Despite the fact that the subgroup-derived points have the appearance of reduced weighting in the school index calculation, the SEA contends that the subgroup weighting is appropriate given the manner in which the subgroup points are utilized in the Focus school identification.

NSPF calculations were performed on 2010-2011 data from all Nevada public schools. As indicated in Section 2.A of this application, the NSPF provides for a very conservative range of values related of the highest and lowest ends of performance in order to mitigate misclassification of points due to measurement variations. Using the 95th percentile to earn the maximum number of points for any indicator serves as a rigorous but attainable target.

Additional values within these tables were derived by using statewide descriptive statistics for the 5th, 25th, 75th, and 95th percentiles. This allows for schools to earn incremental points for performance that approaches the highest targets.

Elementary and Middle School Calculations for the NSPF

Median Growth Percentiles (MGP)

Table 2.B.1 outlines the point values associated with ranges of performance for the **elementary school** Median Growth Percentile (MGP) calculations.

Table 2.B.1 Elementary School Point Values for MGP Calculations

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
MGP	< 34	2	MGP	< 32	2
	≥ 34 and < 44	4		≥ 32 and < 43	4
	≥ 44 and < 58	6		≥ 43 and < 58	6
	≥ 58 and < 67	8		≥ 58 and < 69	8
	≥ 67	10		≥ 69	10

Table 2.B.2 outlines the point values associated with ranges of performance for the **middle school** Median Growth Percentile (**MGP**) calculations.

Table 2.B.2 Middle School Point Values for MGP Calculations

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
MGP	< 30	2	MGP	< 26	2
	≥ 30 and < 43	4		≥ 26 and < 42	4
	≥ 43 and < 53	6		≥ 42 and < 55	6
	≥ 53 and < 60	8		≥ 55 and < 61	8
	≥ 60	10		≥ 61	10

Adequate Growth Percentiles (AGP) for All Students

Table 2.B.3 outlines the **elementary school** point values for the percentages of all students that meet their AGPs.

Table 2.B.3 Elementary School "All Student" Point Values for Percentages Meeting AGP

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
% Meeting AGP	< 35%	2	% Meeting AGP	< 34%	2
	≥ 35% and < 48%	4		≥ 34% and < 46%	4
	≥ 48% and < 68%	6		≥ 46% and < 66%	6
	≥ 68% and < 79%	8		≥ 66% and < 79%	8
	≥ 79%	10		≥ 79%	10

Table 2.B.4 outlines the **middle school** point values for the percentages of all students that meet their AGPs.

Table 2.B.4 Middle School "All Student" Point Values for Percentages Meeting AGP

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
% Meeting AGP	< 16%	2	% Meeting AGP	< 14%	2
	≥ 16% and < 29%	4		≥ 14% and < 27%	4
	≥ 29% and < 49%	6		≥ 27% and < 42%	6
	≥ 49% and < 57%	8		≥ 42% and < 53%	8
	≥ 57%	10		≥ 53%	10

Adequate Growth Percentiles (AGP) for Subgroups of Students

Table 2.B.5 outlines the **elementary school** point values the percentages of students within the FRL, ELL, and IEP subgroups that meet their AGPs. **This table is used only when there are a minimum of ten (10) students within each of the identified subgroups**.

Table 2.B.5 Elementary School "Subgroup" Point Values for Percentages Meeting AGP

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
FRL % Meeting AGP	< 31%	0	FRL % Meeting AGP	< 30%	0
	≥ 31% and < 43%	1		≥ 30% and < 42%	1
	≥ 43% and < 61%	2		≥ 42% and < 59%	2
	≥ 61%	3.33		≥ 59%	3.33
ELL % Meeting AGP	< 9%	0	ELL % Meeting AGP	< 14%	0
	≥ 9% and < 18%	1		≥ 14% and < 27%	1
	≥ 18% and < 38%	2		≥ 27% and < 50%	2
	≥ 38%	3.33		≥ 50%	3.33
IEP % Meeting AGP	< 1%	0	IEP % Meeting AGP	< 9%	0
	≥ 1% and < 15%	1		≥ 9% and < 20%	1
	≥ 15% and < 36%	2		≥ 20% and < 48%	2
	≥ 36%	3.33		≥ 48%	3.33

Table 2.B.6 outlines the **elementary school** point values the percentages of students within the supergroup of FRL, ELL, and IEP students that meet their AGPs. **This table is used only when there are fewer than ten (10) students within one or more of the identified subgroups.**

Table 2.B.6 Elementary School "Supergroup" Point Values for Percentages Meeting AGP

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
% Meeting AGP	< 31%	0	% Meeting AGP	< 28%	0
	≥ 31% and < 42%	3		≥ 28% and < 41%	3
	≥ 42% and < 58%	6		≥ 41% and < 58%	6
	≥ 58%	10		≥ 58%	10

Table 2.B.7 outlines the **middle school** point values the percentages of students within the FRL, ELL, and IEP subgroups that meet their AGPs. **This table is used only when there are a minimum of ten (10) students within each of the identified subgroups**.

Table 2.B.7 Middle School "Subgroup" Point Values for Percentages Meeting AGP

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
FRL % Meeting AGP	< 18%	0	FRL % Meeting AGP	< 13%	0
	≥ 18% and < 26%	1		≥ 13% and < 25%	1
	≥ 26% and < 36%	2		≥ 25% and < 37%	2
	≥ 36%	3.33		≥ 37%	3.33
ELL % Meeting AGP	< 1%	0	ELL % Meeting AGP	< 5%	0
	≥ 1% and < 2%	1		≥ 5% and < 10%	1
	≥ 2% and < 9%	2		≥ 10% and < 22%	2
	≥ 9%	3.33		≥ 22%	3.33
IEP % Meeting AGP	< 1%	0	IEP % Meeting AGP	< 2%	0
	≥ 1% and < 4%	1		≥ 2% and < 8%	1
	≥ 4% and < 12%	2		≥ 8% and < 18%	2
	≥ 12%	3.33		≥ 18%	3.33

Table 2.B.8 outlines the **middle school** point values the percentages of students within the supergroup of FRL, ELL, and IEP students that meet their AGPs. **This table is used only when there are fewer than ten (10) students within one or more of the identified subgroups.**

Table 2.B.8 Middle School "Supergroup" Point Values for Percentages Meeting AGP

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
% Meeting AGP	< 15%	0	% Meeting AGP	< 11%	0
	≥ 15% and < 25%	3		≥ 11% and < 23%	3
	≥ 25% and < 33%	6		≥ 23% and < 35%	6
	≥ 33%	10		≥ 35%	10

Status

Tables 2.B.9 and 2.B.10 outline the point values associated with ranges of performance for percentages of students who are deemed "proficient" in a school.

Table 2.B.9 Elementary School Point Values for Proficiency

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
Proficiency	< 35%	3	Proficiency	< 49%	3
	≥ 35% and < 49%	6		≥ 49% and < 62%	6
	≥ 49% and < 70%	9		≥ 62% and < 79%	9
	≥ 70% and < 81%	12		≥ 79% and < 89%	12
	≥ 81%	15		≥ 89%	15

Table 2.B.10 Middle School Point Values for Proficiency

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
Proficiency	< 28%	3	Proficiency	< 29%	3
	≥ 28% and < 40%	6		≥ 29% and < 57%	6
	≥ 40% and < 62%	9		≥ 57% and < 76%	9
	≥ 62% and < 70%	12		≥ 76% and < 83%	12
	≥ 70%	15		≥ 83%	15

Other Indicator
Tables 2.B.11 and 2.B.12 outline the point values associated with ranges associated with a school's average daily attendance calculated through the 100th day of instruction.

Table 2.B.11 Elementary School Average Daily Attendance

Criteria	Points
< 94%	2
≥ 94% and < 95%	4
≥ 95% and < 96%	6
≥ 96% and < 97%	8
≥ 97%	10

Table 2.B.12 Middle School Average Daily Attendance

Criteria	Points
< 92%	2
≥ 92% and < 94%	4
≥ 94% and < 96%	6
≥ 96% and < 99%	8
≥ 99%	10

<u>High School Calculations for NSPF Targets</u>

Status/Growth

For a high school Nevada SPF school index score, a maximum of 30 points is attributed to the Status (or Achievement) and Growth category. Although 10th Growth data were not specifically included in the first version of Nevada's application, the capacity to calculate and report growth estimates from 8th grade to 10th grade was developed within the past two months. The 30 points are equally divided among the Reading and Mathematics proficiency rates for 10th grade, first-time test-takers; 11th grade cumulative proficiency rates, and 10th grade school-level median SGPs. Points earned in the area of 11th grade cumulative proficiency were derived from the same methodology as the AMO calculations. For purposes of clarification, the 10th grade proficiency and growth indicators and the 11th grade cumulative proficiency rates represent different cohorts of students. Therefore, there is no duplication of students between the 10th and 11th grade groups.

Tables 2.B.13 outlines the point values associated with ranges of performance for percentages of students who are deemed "proficient" in reading and mathematics in grade 10; while Table 2.B.14 outlines point values for 11th grade cumulative reading and mathematics proficiency.

Table 2.B.13 High School Point Values for Proficiency in Grade 10

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
Proficiency	< 21%	1	Proficiency	< 19%	1
	≥ 21% an < 41%	2		≥ 19% and < 40%	2
	≥ 41% and < 63%	3		≥ 40% and < 66%	3
	≥ 63% and < 83%	4		≥ 66% and < 86%	4
	≥ 83%	5		≥ 86%	5

Table 2.B.14 High School Point Values for Cumulative Proficiency in Grade 11

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
Proficiency	< 45%	1	Proficiency	< 42%	1
	≥ 45% and < 70%	2		≥ 42% and < 61%	2
	≥ 70% and < 88%	3		≥ 61% and < 87%	3
	≥ 88% and < 99%	4		≥ 87% and < 99%	4
	≥ 99%	5		≥ 99%	5

Table 2.B.15 outlines the point values associated with ranges of performance for the **high school** Median Growth Percentile (**MGP**) calculations.

Table 2.B.15 High School Point Values for MGP Calculations

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
MGP	< 33	1	MGP	< 26	1
	≥ 33 and < 45	2		≥ 26 and < 41	2
	≥ 45 and < 57	3		≥ 41 and < 57	3
	≥ 57 and < 73	4		≥ 57 and < 74	4
	≥ 73	5		≥ 74	5

Table 2.B.16 outlines the **high school** point values for proficiency gap calculations. Targets for the subgroup have been established by determining the difference in percentage points between subgroup proficiency rates and the statewide percentage of proficient students in each of reading and mathematics. Therefore, negative values indicate targets where the subgroup proficiency rate is below the state average, and positive values are when the subgroup proficiency rate exceeds the state average. **This table is used only when there are a minimum of ten (10) students within each of the identified subgroups**.

Table 2.B.16 High School "Subgroup" Point Values for Proficiency Gap Analysis

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
FRL Gap	< -40	0	FRL Gap	< -27	0
	≥ -40 & <-15	.5		≥ -27 & < -16	.5
	≥ -15 & <-1	1		≥ -16 & < 6	1
	≥ -1 & < 18	1.5		≥ 6 & < 22	1.5
	≥ 18	1.67		≥ 22	1.67
ELL Gap	< -71	0	ELL Gap	< -64	0
	≥ -71 & < ~~-14~~ -66	.5		≥ -64 & < -57	.5
	≥ -66 & < ~~-4~~ -51	1		≥ -57 & < -33	1
	≥-51 & < ~~10~~ -33	1.5		≥ -33 & < -10	1.5
	≥ -33	1.67		≥ -10	1.67
IEP Gap	< -63	0	IEP Gap	< -59	0
	≥ -63 & < -51	.5		≥ -59 & < -47	.5
	≥ -51 & < -33	1		≥ -47 & < -27	1
	≥ -33 & < -9	1.5		≥ -27 & < -5	1.5
	≥ -9	1.67		≥ -5	1.67

Table 2.B.17 outlines the **high school** point values for gap calculations. Targets for the supergroup have been established by determining the difference in percentage points between supergroup proficiency rates and the statewide percentage of proficient students in reading and mathematics. Therefore, negative values indicate targets where the supergroup proficiency rate is below the state average, and positive values are when the supergroup proficiency rate exceeds the state average. **This table is used only when there are fewer than ten (10) students within one or more of the identified subgroups.**

Table 2.B.17 High School "Supergroup" Points for Proficiency Gap Analysis

Reading	Criteria	Points	Mathematics	Criteria	Points
% Gap	< -46	0	% Gap	< -46	0
	≥ -46 & < -20	1.5		≥ -46 & < -22	1.5
	≥ -20 & < -6	3		≥ -22 & < 1	3
	≥ -6 & < 16	4.5		≥ 1 & < 21	4.5
	≥ 16	5		≥ 21	5

Graduation

For the high school graduation performance indicator, points are earned by schools depending on the graduation rate for that school. In order to maintain a consistent methodology for the Nevada SPF, the point attributions are based upon percentile cuts in a manner consistent with other performance indicators. Cuts were calculated for the 5th, 25th, 50th,75th, and 95th percentiles for graduation rate as was done throughout the SPF.

The SEA contends that the Nevada SPF is based on technically sound methodologies and is grounded in an appropriate statistical foundation. The proposed methodology creates a situation in which the schools with the highest graduation rates receive the highest points and the schools with the lowest graduation rates receive the lowest number of points. The Graduation Rate point attributions proposed latest version of the Nevada ESEA Waiver Request are presented in Table 2.B.18

Table 2.B.18 Nevada SPF Point Attributions for High School Graduation in ESEA Waiver Request

	< 5%	≥ 5 and < 50%	≥50% and < 75%	≥75 and < 95%	≥95%
Grad. (Overall) Points	0	0	9	12	15
Graduation Rate (2011)	<11	≥ 11 and <64	≥ 64 and < 83	≥ 83 and < 97	≥ 97

The SEA acknowledges that earning points for a low school graduation rate appears to lack rigor.

Based upon input from the USED and since high school graduation would be considered one of several important end goals of K-12 education, the SEA believes it is more appropriate to opt for a rigorous criterion based point attribution scenario at the expense of internal consistency.

To that end, the SEA calculated AMOs for high school graduation based on the 50th percentile of schools, which follows the methodology proposed in the ESEA Waiver Request. The 2011-12 restart of baseline represents the school graduation rate for the 50th percentile of schools and the 2016-17 target is the 95th percentile. The underlying premise is that the average students in the future (2017) should be performing similarly to the best students of today (2012). The 2010-11 cut point (baseline) is set at the school graduation rate (percent of students who graduated) of the 50th percentile of schools in 2011.The cut-point calculation for the NSPF uses an N-count threshold of 10 students.

The 2016-17 target is set at the school-level graduation rate (percent of students who graduated in 4 years) of the 95th percentile of schools in 2011. The 2016-17 target (95th percentile from 2010-11 baseline) is a meaningful and ambitious target for schools to work toward. In order to reach this ambitious goal interim targets were set annually from 2011-12 to 2016-17 (5 school years) with equal incremental increases. The SEA acknowledges that the proposed AMOs are ambitious but believe the AMOs are achievable with focused efforts. The specific AMOs for school graduation rate are presented in Table 2.B.19 The AMOs will vary neither by high school type (regular, charter, etc.) nor by subgroup, requiring schools and groups further behind to make greater annual gains.

In addition to the increased rigor of the graduation AMOs described above, the SEA values the reduction of gaps in the graduation rates of our subgroups in the NSPF. Baseline data from the 2010-2011 school year were used to determine the subgroup graduation gap. Maximum index points are earned by schools demonstrating subgroup graduation gaps at or above the 95th percentile of schools for each subgroup. Index points earned are in inverse relation to the size of the graduation gap.

Table 2.B.19 AMOs for HS Cohort Graduation Rate Using 2011 Results as Baseline.

Scenario	Description	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
3	School	63.91	70.53	77.14	83.76	90.37	96.99

Annual grad rate increase = (96.99 – 63.91) / 5 = 6.616

Table 2.B.20 outlines the **high school** point values for the "All Students" group who graduate from high school in four years with a standard, advanced, or adult diploma. The calculation for this indicator is the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR).

Table 2.B.20 Graduation Rate

Criteria	Points
< 11%	0
≥ 11% and < 64%	0
≥ 64% and < 83%	9
≥ 83% and < 97%	12
≥ 97%	15

Table 2.B. 21 outlines the **high school** point values for the high school graduation gap calculations. Targets for the subgroups have been established by determining the difference in percentage points between subgroup graduation rates and the average ACGR graduation rate for all students across the state. Therefore, negative values indicate targets where the subgroup graduation rate is below the state average, and positive values are when the subgroup graduation rate exceeds the state average. The SEA values the reduction of gaps in the graduation rates of our subgroups in the NSPF. Baseline data from the 2010-2011 school year were used to determine the subgroup graduation gap. Maximum index points are earned by schools demonstrating subgroup, graduation gaps at or above the 95th percentile of schools for each subgroup. These index points are earned in inverse relation to the size of the graduation gap. **This table is used only when there are a minimum of ten (10) students within each of the identified subgroups.**

Table 2.B.21 Subgroup Graduation Rate Gaps

Graduation Rate	Criteria	Points
FRL Gap	< -41	1
	≥ -41 and < -6	2
	≥ -6 and < 18	3
	≥ 18 and < 39	4
	≥ 39	5
ELL Gap	< -60	1
	≥ -60 and < -51	2
	≥ -51 and < -38	3
	≥ -38 and < -12	4
	≥ -12	5
IEP Gap	< -60	1
	≥ -60 and < -48	2
	≥ -48 and < -20	3
	≥ -20 and < 4	4
	≥ 4	5

Table 2.B. 22 outlines the **high school** point values for the Nevada SPF graduation gap calculations when the supergroup analysis is utilized. Targets for the supergroup have been established by determining the difference in percentage points between supergroup graduation rates and the average ACGR graduation rate for all students. Therefore, negative values indicate targets where the supergroup graduation rate is below the state average, and positive values are when the supergroup graduation rate exceeds the state average. **This table is used only when there are fewer than ten (10) students within one or more of the identified subgroups.**

Table 2.B.22 High School "Supergroup" Graduation Rate Gaps

Graduation Rate	Criteria	Points
Supergroup Gap	< -60	3
	≥ -60 and < -13	6
	≥ -13 and < 14	9
	≥ 14 and < 33	12
	≥ 33	15

College Readiness

Table 2.B.23 outlines the point values the percentage of students who enroll in college remediation courses for English and mathematics instead of credit-bearing courses in their first year of college.

Table 2.B.23 Percentage of Students in Nevada Colleges/Universities Requiring Remediation

Criteria	Points
≥ 73%	0
≥ 52% and < 73%	1
≥ 24% and < 52%	2
≥ 13% and < 24%	3
< 13%	4

Table 2.B.24 outlines the point values for the percentage of students who earn an advanced diploma upon completion of high school within four years beginning in 9th grade.

Table 2.B. 24 Percentage of Students Earning an Advanced Diploma

Criteria	Points
< 1%	0
≥ 1% and < 17%	1
≥ 17% and < 40%	2
≥ 40% and < 57%	3
≥ 57%	4

Table 2.B.25 outlines the point values for the percentage of 12th grade students who passed at least one AP course throughout their high school career and/or earned at least one college credit before June 2011.

Table 2.B.25 Percentage of Students That Earn College Credit in High School

Criteria	Points
< 10%	0
≥ 10% and < 25%	1
≥ 25% and < 45%	2
≥ 45% and < 70%	3
≥ 70%	4

Table 2.B.26 outlines the point values for the percentage of 11th grade students who participated in at least one examination of the ACT or SAT.

Table 2.B.26 Percentage of 11th Graders That Participate in an ACT or SAT Exam

Criteria	Points
< 8%	0
≥ 8% and < 27%	1
≥ 27% and < 49%	2
≥ 49% and < 74%	3
≥ 74%	4

Other Indicators

Table 2.B.27 outlines the point values for the percentage of students who are credit deficient (earn fewer than 5 credits) at the completion of 9th grade.

Table 2.B.27 Percentage of Students Who Are Credit Deficient at the End of 9th Grade

Criteria	Points
≥ 88%	0
≥ 72% and < 88%	1
≥ 17% and < 72%	2
≥ 11% and < 17%	3
< 11%	4

Table 2.B.28 outlines the point values associated with ranges related to a school's average daily attendance, as calculated through the 100th day of instruction.

Table 2.B.28 High School Average Daily Attendance

Criteria	Points
< 85%	2
≥ 85% and < 92%	4
≥ 92% and < 95%	6
≥ 95% and < 99%	8
≥ 99%	10

Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)

Nevada does not set AMOs that vary by LEA, school, or subgroup. All students, subgroups, schools, and districts are accountable to the standard of college and career ready. Nevada educators understand that some students, subgroups, and schools start farther behind and that meeting these proposed ambitious targets will require greater annual growth.

The Nevada Department of Education will build upon the 2010-2011 school proficiency levels to establish annual cut-points through the 2016-2017 school year. The 2010-2011 cut point (baseline) is set at the school-level proficiency rate (percent of students who meet or exceed standards) of the 50th percentile of schools in 2011. The cut-points are set separately for reading and mathematics and for elementary, middle and high schools.

The 2016- 2017 target is set at the school-level proficiency rate (percent of students who meet or exceed standards) of the 90th percentile of schools in 2011. The 2016--2017 target (90th-percentile from 2010-2011 baseline) is a meaningful and ambitious target for schools to work toward. In order to reach this ambitious goal interim targets were set annually from 2011-2012 to 2016-2017 (6 school years) with equal incremental increases. The SEA acknowledges that the proposed AMOs are ambitious but believe the AMOs are achievable with focused efforts. The specific AMOs for Reading and Mathematics by school level are presented in Table 2.B.29. The AMOs will vary neither by school nor by subgroup, requiring schools and groups further behind to make greater annual gains. The SEA will be required to revisit the AMOs as the transitional math cut scores expire after the 2012 assessment administration.

The reading and mathematics AMOs and NSPF index tables for proficiency were derived from the same methodology (described previously in this application); and represent rigorous, but attainable expectations for all schools. High school AMO calculations are based on 11th grade cumulative proficiency rates in the same manner as the NSPF calculations. Additionally, student performance for the "All Students" group, as well as all subgroups will be compared against the appropriate AMO for each year and reported on the Nevada Report Card website, and included in all reports used for the purposes of school improvement.

Table 2.B.29: AMOs for Reading and Mathematics through 2017.

		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Read	ES	62.73	65.83	68.92	72.02	75.11	78.21	81.30
	MS	53.66	56.43	59.19	61.96	64.73	67.49	70.26
	HS	72.42	76.92	81.42	85.92	90.42	94.92	99.42
Math	ES	70.57	73.56	76.56	79.55	82.54	85.54	88.53
	MS	67.35	69.98	72.61	75.24	77.87	80.50	83.13
	HS	77.97	81.51	85.04	88.58	92.17	95.65	99.19

2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools . If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

Reward schools are identified as " Highest Performing" or " High Progress." Schools that are both high performing and high progress are deemed "Exemplary". Designation of Reward Schools will be made separately for elementary, middle and high. Both Title I and non-Title I schools will be eligible for Reward School designation.

Reward — Highest Performing Schools

To be designated as a "Highest Performing" elementary or middle school, a school must be among the schools in the State with the highest absolute performance over a number of years for the "all students" group and for all subgroups on the State's statewide assessments that are part of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. The Highest Performing school must have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the previous year for the "all students" group and all its subgroups. The school may not be designated as a Highest Performing school if there are significant gaps across subgroups that are not closing in the school.

To be designated as a "Highest Performing" high school, a school must be among the schools in the State with the highest absolute performance over a number of years for the "all students" group and for all subgroups on the State's statewide assessments that are part of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. The Highest Performing high school must have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the previous year for the "all students" group and all its subgroups. The school may not be designated as a Highest Performing high school if there are significant gaps across subgroups that are not closing in the school. A Highest Performing high school must be among the high schools with the highest graduation rate, with no significant gaps in graduation rates across subgroups that are not closing in the school.

Reward — High Progress Schools

To be designated as a "High Progress" elementary or middle school, a school must be among the schools in the State making the most progress in improving the performance of the "all students" group over a number of years on the statewide assessments that are part of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. A school may not be designated as a high-progress school if there are significant achievement gaps across subgroups that are not closing in the school.

To be designated as a "High Progress" high school, a school must be among the schools in the State making the most progress in improving the performance of the "all students" group over a number of years on the statewide assessments that are part of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. A school may not be designated as a high-progress high school if there are significant achievement gaps across subgroups that are not

closing in the school. A high school may not be designated as a High Progress school if there are significant achievement gaps across subgroups that are not closing in the school.

To be identified as an Exemplary school, a school must qualify as both Highest Performing and High Progress as defined in the previous paragraphs.

Before identifying Reward schools, the SEA determined the number of schools that were to be identified as Reward schools; for purposes here that means five percent of Title I served schools. For 2010-11, the SEA identified 177 Title I served schools meaning that the SEA could identify 9 Title I Reward schools. The SEA made the decision to identify a proportionate number of elementary, middle, and high schools based on the proportion of each school level of the total number of Title I served schools. In applying the rigorous Reward School criteria, the SEA acknowledged the differences in achievement displayed by elementary, middle and high schools and so conducted the analysis by school level. For purposes here, the SEA identified 5 elementary schools and 1 high school as Reward. No Title I middle schools met the Reward School criteria.

Identifying Reward Schools

The SEA followed the process specified below to identify Reward High Performing Schools.

1. Determine whether potential schools meet the n-count threshold of 25 students and exclude schools from further consideration that do not meet the n-count threshold.
2. Determine whether all ESEA subgroups and the "all students" group met the 2009-10 and 2010-11 AMOs for ELA and mathematics. Exclude schools from further consideration that did not meet the ELA and mathematics AMOs (made AYP) for the two consecutive years. For purposes here, the AMOs refer to the reading and mathematics annual targets (described above) developed using the 50th percentile of schools as the current baseline and the 90th percentile of schools as the 6-year target.
3. Determine whether all ESEA subgroups and the "all students" group met the 95 percent participation goal on ESEA assessments. Exclude schools from further consideration that do not meet the 95 percent participation threshold.
4. The SEA determined that if a school earned at least one-half of the total gap points available, there were no "significant" gaps at the prospective schools. Schools earning fewer than one-half of the available points were deemed to have "significant" achievement gaps and were excluded from further consideration as a Reward school.
5. To identify the Highest Performing Title I schools, rank order (highest to lowest) all schools based on the total number of points earned from the Status subtotaled portion from the Achievement portion of the Nevada SPF school index scores.
6. Identify the cut-point for the top five percent of Title I-Served elementary schools and flag the top five percent of Title I schools as Reward-High Status. Flag all other Non-Title I elementary schools meeting the above criteria and having a point value equal to or greater than the cut-point as "Reward-NonTitle".
7. Identify the cut-point for the top five percent of Title I-Served middle schools and flag the top five percent of Title I schools as Reward-High Status. Flag all other Non-Title I middle schools meeting the above criteria and having a point value equal to or greater

than the cut-point as "Reward-NonTitle". No Title I middle schools were identified as Reward schools because they were eliminated as a result of step 6 above.

8. Identify the cut-point for the top five percent of Title I-Served high schools and flag the top five percent of Title I schools as Reward-High Status. Flag all other Non-Title I high schools meeting the above criteria and having a point value equal to or greater than the cut-point as "Reward-NonTitle".

Next, the SEA followed the process specified below to identify Reward High Performing Graduation Rate High Schools

1. Determine whether potential schools meet the n-count threshold of 25 students and exclude schools from further consideration that do not meet the n-count threshold.
2. Determine whether all ESEA subgroups and the "all students" group met the 2009-10 and 2010-11 AMOs for ELA and mathematics. Exclude schools from further consideration that did not meet the ELA and mathematics AMOs (made AYP) for the two consecutive years. For purposes here, the AMOs refer to the reading and mathematics annual targets (described above) developed using the 50th percentile of schools as the current baseline and the 90th percentile of schools as the 6-year target.
3. Determine whether all ESEA subgroups and the "all students" group met the 95 percent participation goal on ESEA assessments. Exclude schools from further consideration that do not meet the 95 percent participation threshold.
4. The SEA determined that if a school earned at least one-half of the total gap points available, there were no "significant" gaps at the prospective schools. Schools earning fewer than one-half of the available points were deemed to have "significant" achievement gaps and were excluded from further consideration as a Reward school.
5. To identify a Highest Performing Title I high school in the area of graduation rate, rank order (highest to lowest) all schools based on the total number of points earned from the Graduation Rate portion of the Nevada SPF school index scores.
6. Identify the cut-point for the top five percent of Title I-Served high schools and flag the top five percent of Title I schools as Reward-High Performing Graduation. Flag all other Non-Title I high schools meeting the above criteria and having a point value equal to or greater than the cut-point as "Reward-NonTitle". Using the 2010-2011 graduation data, no Title I-Served high schools could be identified as Reward-High Performing Graduation.

The SEA followed the process below to identify Reward High Progress Schools.

1. Determine whether potential schools meet the n-count threshold of 25 students and exclude schools from further consideration that do not meet the n-count threshold.
2. Determine whether all ESEA subgroups and the "all students" group met the 2009-10 and 2010-11 AMOs for ELA and mathematics. Exclude schools from further consideration that did not meet the AMOs (made AYP) for the two consecutive years. For purposes here, the AMOs refer to the reading and mathematics annual targets

(described above) developed using the 50th percentile of schools as the current baseline and the 90th percentile of schools as the 6-year target.

3. Determine whether all ESEA subgroups and the "all students" group met the 95 percent participation goal on ESEA assessments. Exclude schools from further consideration that do not meet the 95 percent participation threshold.
4. The SEA determined that if a school earned at least one-half of the total gap points available, there were no "significant" gaps at the prospective schools. Schools earning fewer than one-half of the available points were deemed to have "significant" achievement gaps and were excluded from further consideration as a Reward school.
5. To identify the High Progress Title I schools, rank order (highest to lowest) all schools based on the total number of points earned from the Growth subtotaled portion from the Achievement portion of the Nevada SPF school index scores.
6. Identify the cut-point for the top five percent of Title I-Served elementary schools and flag the top five percent of Title I schools as Reward-High Growth. Flag all other Non-Title I elementary schools meeting the above criteria and having a point value equal to or greater than the cut-point as "Reward-NonTitle".
7. Identify the cut-point for the top five percent of Title I-Served middle schools and flag the top five percent of Title I schools as Reward-High Growth. Flag all other Non-Title I middle schools meeting the above criteria and having a point value equal to or greater than the cut-point as "Reward-NonTitle".
8. Identify the cut-point for the top five percent of Title I-Served high schools and flag the top five percent of Title I schools as Reward-High Growth. Flag all other Non-Title I high schools meeting the above criteria and having a point value equal to or greater than the cut-point as "Reward-NonTitle".

As described above, the SEA proposes to identify Reward-High Status and Reward-High Growth schools on the basis of points earned through the Nevada SPF. While the SEA contends that the Nevada SPF is effective in identifying Reward schools, the SEA acknowledges the importance of insuring that Reward schools are also the absolute highest performers with respect to proficiency and progress. As a means to determine whether the methodology is effective in identifying the correct set of schools, the SEA conducted two additional analyses to ensure that only the highest performing schools are being identified as Reward.

First, the SEA rank ordered (from highest to lowest) all Title I served schools on the basis of ELA and mathematics proficiency for the "all students" group. The SEA filtered out school records where a substantial achievement gap was indicated. The resulting list of highest performing schools (Reward) was identical to the Reward school list generated as a result of rank ordering schools on the basis of Nevada SPF points earned for status, but the relative order of schools differed somewhat. The SEA then conducted an identical analysis but using growth SGPs as the indicator and came up the same list of Title I schools as Reward-High Progress.
As another attempt to demonstrate the alignment between the Nevada SPF accountability model and performance indicators, the SEA utilized the USED-approved SIG analysis to identify Reward schools. Instead of using the SIG analysis to identify the lowest performing schools, the SEA added a couple of filtering steps to identify the highest performing schools. After filtering out schools where an achievement gap was evident and ranking schools based on status and progress, the list of Title I served schools based on the SIG analysis matched the list of Reward

schools identified through the use of the Nevada SPF. Again, the list corresponded favorably but the relative order differed.

Regardless of the methodology utilized, the list of highest performing schools in Nevada deviates little. While the specific ordering of schools differs somewhat depending on the methodology, the overall list remains unchanged. The SEA disclosed the list of highest performing schools to LEA personnel and the LEA concur as to the accuracy of the SEA Reward identification. Based on this rudimentary work and consultation with the LEAs, the SEA asserts that it has demonstrated alignment between the performance indicators and the Nevada SPF.

In applying the rigorous Reward School identification process outlined in the USED Flexibility Guidelines, the SEA identified a total of 6 (five elementary and one high school) Title I schools as Reward Schools. Additional demonstrations, using other criteria validate the identification of these schools.

The SEA recognizes the USED concern as to ensuring that the methodologies employed to identify Reward schools has indeed identified the highest performing schools with respect to performance and progress. The methodology for identifying Reward schools is described elsewhere in the Nevada ESEA Waiver Request. Also described elsewhere in the request are additional analyses the SEA conducted to demonstrate that the identified schools met the ESEA flexibility definitions.

The SEA followed the prescribed methodology for identifying Reward schools and re-identified the highest performing Title I elementary schools and labeled those schools as *Reward1*. The SEA identified the next highest schools using the same methodology and labeled those schools as *Reward2*. For purposes here, the *Reward1* group is comprised of the Title I elementary schools actually identified as Reward-Growth and the *Reward2* group is comprised of the Title I elementary schools that would have been identified as Reward if the list were to be expanded. The SEA then computed the average reading and mathematics proficiency rate for the "all students" group and the ESEA subgroups. The intent is to demonstrate that (as a group) the highest performing Title I schools (*Reward1*) are correctly identified as Reward schools.

Using the USED Reward-High Progress school criteria, the SEA identified a total of 6 Reward schools (five elementary and one high school). For demonstration purposes, table 2.C.1 below shows that (as a group) the 5 elementary schools identified as Reward schools (*Reward1* group) yielded an average reading proficiency rate of 65.69 percent which is approximately 11 percentage points higher than the next 5 Title I schools (*Reward2* group) and more than 17 percentage points higher than All Title I elementary schools. For math, the identified Reward schools (*Reward1* group) yielded an average proficiency rate of approximately 80 percent which is almost 10 percentage points higher than the next 5 schools (*Reward2* group) and almost 17 percentage points higher than All Title I elementary schools. In nearly every case, the average reading and mathematics proficiency rates for the identified Reward schools group (*Reward1*) are substantially higher than for any of the other groups. The SEA contends that the Reward schools identified in the ESEA Waiver Request are in fact the highest performing Title I schools in the state.

Table 2.C.1: Reading and Mathematics Proficiency Rates for Reward Schools, All Title I Schools, and All Schools

	Reward1 ES*		*Reward2* ES**		All Title I ES		All ES	
	Percent Proficient		Percent Proficient		Percent Proficient		Percent Proficient	
	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math
School	65.69	79.59	54.35	70.03	48.52	62.75	55.08	66.77
IEP	30.73	42.61	24.78	46.60	23.55	36.74	28.84	42.10
LEP	61.50	78.06	47.50	68.16	42.69	60.55	45.60	62.53
FRL	63.86	79.33	51.71	68.50	46.18	61.04	49.73	62.42

*Note: *Reward1* ES = the 5 Title I elementary schools identified as Reward in the most recent Waiver request.
**Note: *Reward2* ES = the next 5 Title I elementary schools that would have been identified as Reward if the number of schools were expanded.

The SEA did not compute a similar table for the middle and high schools, as only one school would comprise the high school level. If additional middle or high schools had been identified as Reward, the SEA would expect similar findings as those for the elementary schools.

2.C.ii Provide the SEA's list of reward schools in Table 2.

2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

The NDE and school districts will approach recognition of schools through multiple avenues. First, school designations are prominently reported on school profiles that are made available to schools, districts, and the public at large. Second, the State will work with districts to provide plaques and assemblies wherein the schools winning the highest awards are honored. Third, the NDE will invite award winners to the annual Mega Conference — a "model" schools conference that provides an opportunity for these schools to showcase their efforts, thus providing the system and other schools the opportunity to learn from the success of these schools. Through the annual Mega Conference, the NDE has been bringing quality professional development on current trends and best practices in education to Nevada for almost two decades. The conference celebrates Nevada's successes and highlights strategies and programs that have been proven to effect change for learners and educators alike. A special luncheon is held to recognize Nevada schools and individuals that have demonstrated success in helping all students succeed.

Incentivizing Peer Mentoring, Networking, and Collegiality

Nevada will promote greater collaboration between schools and school districts, whereby staff at identified reward schools will be encouraged to share best practices, to support other schools in learning how to get better faster. Maximizing the human capital of outstanding teachers and administrators that are already an integral part of the educational landscape in Nevada is a strategic use of resources and is reinforcing in both directions. The NDE is committed to the development and ongoing enhancement of an electronic portal designed to support teachers and administrators in accessing materials and instructional resources to support high quality, differentiated instruction. This portal will serve as an access point for sharing the proven

practices that are in place at Nevada's reward schools in order to further promote replication of successful strategies. Features such as blogs and learning forums will be established so that administrators and teachers can dialogue about the use of these tools and approaches. Highly effective educators from Reward Schools will be featured in the portal, providing them with individual and school-based recognition, as well as supporting scale up of evidence based practices. Additional considerations for portal-based learning include the following:

- Face to face or virtual communication pathways sustained throughout the system of education
- Digital resources including ideas such as the existing Wiki teacher and Curriculum Engine, and videos of teachers working with specific student populations and cataloged in a searchable library, with real classroom examples. Teachers can search by subject, standard, grade, and pull up examples of real classroom instruction, such as a math or English lesson. Further, teachers could access examples of colleagues working with specific populations, such as English Language Learners and special education students. The library could monitor the hits made on particular teachers' contributions and highlight those teachers who have high traffic utilization and high ratings from viewers.
- Principals will sponsor and conduct webinars on chosen topics, convene Professional Learning Communities (PLC's), and post publicly their "ten big ideas" on a website.

These ideas for incentivizing outstanding principals and teachers to share best practices is only the beginning of an exciting journey, marked by meaningful collaboration designed to improve all schools, support all teachers, and ensure that all students are "ready by exit."

Additional methods for recognizing and rewarding school success may include:

1. Implementing signing bonuses for teachers and administrators recruited to serve at a priority and focus schools.
2. Establishing Pay-for-Performance financial incentive systems for teachers and administrators based on the schools' annual performance.
3. Providing additional compensation for teachers through additional instruction built into the school day.
4. Exploring plans whereby "career ladders" are developed for teachers and administrators at each of the priority and focus schools.
5. Removing the priority and focus schools from the requirements of a reduction-in-force during the period in which they are identified as having such a classification.

All of the approaches described herein for recognizing school success have been generated through the active partnership of the NDE and Nevada's school districts. These ideas were centrally generated through The Core Group, as described in Question 2 of this application, which included representation from the NDE along with district administrators from Nevada's two large urban districts as well as one small and two mid-size districts that are representative of the diversity of the state's 15 non-urban districts. (As a reminder, Nevada has only 17 school districts).

Additional, existing forms of recognition include identification of Title I Distinguished Schools and National Blue Ribbon Schools, as described here. Title I Distinguished Schools undergo a multiple step process of selection. All Title I schools that have achieved High Status, High Growth, or Exemplary Status are identified. Through a district selection process, identified

schools are invited to send in an application to become a Title I Distinguished School. The schools that apply participate in interviews with an NDE interview team to respond to questions pertaining to successful practices. From these interviews, winning schools are selected. The National Blue Ribbon Schools program is part of the USDOE's effort to identify and disseminate information about successful schools. Up to three schools may be selected annually by the NDE if they meet targeted criteria in designated categories.

Finally, each school district will work proactively to engage the community. Dramatic change requires active two-way communication with local stakeholders. Successful efforts to engage the community are characterized by public acknowledgement of past failures coupled with a forceful, positive vision for the future. Publicizing early "wins" can also send a powerful message that change is possible when all stakeholders work together. In the 2011 Legislative Session, State policy makers demonstrated their commitment to parent involvement and family engagement by passing legislation that lays out expectations for what the NDE must do to support effective practices in this arena. In order to assure achievement of these important efforts, a full-time education programs professional was budgeted by the Legislature and approved by the Governor, and has been hired to accomplish a comprehensive scope of work for parent involvement and family engagement, including working with the high-powered statewide Advisory Council for Parent Involvement and Family Engagement. This individual will also network with other designated parent leadership organizations such as Nevada State PTA, Nevada PEP, and the Education Alliance, among others.

2.D PRIORITY SCHOOLS

2.D.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State's Title I schools as priority schools. If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

To be identified as a Priority elementary, middle, or high school, a school must be among the lowest performing schools based on the NSPF index points in reading and mathematics earned in the areas of Proficiency (Status) and Progress (Growth) during the current year. While a Priority designation will be determined for both Title I and non-Title I schools, the level at which the process identifies the lowest-performing 5% of Title I schools at each of the grade level configurations (elementary, middle, and high) will be the cut-off for identification of all Priority schools. Additionally, every high school with a graduation rate of less than 60% will also be identified as a Priority School.

Once a school is identified as a Priority School, supports and interventions will be planned for a minimum 3-year period. These schools will continue to be judged using the same index system being applied to all schools. However, once identified, these schools will remain on "probationary" status as Priority for the 3-year period. No additional schools will be designated as Priority for this three-year period.

For purposes of consistency in transition to the new accountability system, Priority Schools submitted for this application were identified using previously-approved SIG methodology. The methodology submitted with this application will be used to identify Priority Schools beyond the three-year period required under this waiver.

2.D.ii Provide the SEA's list of priority schools in Table 2.

2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

All schools must submit a school improvement plan annually. Those schools that have been identified as a Priority school must develop a Priority Turnaround Plan. A Priority Turnaround Plan requires higher levels of monitoring and oversight from the district and the NDE until academic achievement and growth improves. The NDE will require that all schools designated as priority include in their plans the following information:

- Descriptions of the overall research-based approach about how performance will improve.
- Descriptions of the new improvement strategies to be implemented.
- Descriptions of the action steps that will be taken to implement the improvement strategies, including the timeline, key personnel, resources, and implementation benchmarks.

The higher levels of monitoring and oversight will be employed through the focus of planning for successful implementation by the district. Building on experience gleaned through the NDE's implementation of the SIG program over the past two years, a tightly focused district-level plan with clear timelines and frequent benchmarks for accountability are critical, so that strategies can be adjusted as data indicates the need, in order to support successful implementation. In addition, and again through previous experience with SIG, the NDE will develop and implement a Priority Turnaround Plan implementation monitoring system for each district that has one or more Priority schools that focuses on the essential implementation drivers listed below.

The role of the LEA in supporting Priority Schools will be essential. Therefore the NDE will work with district leadership in those districts that have identified priority schools to build district capacity to support rapid school turnaround. In order to determine if the school's leadership, infrastructure, and staff is adequate to engage productively in turnaround efforts, and the likelihood of positive returns on State resources and support in improving student achievement, the SEA will partner with districts to establish current school and district capacity for adopting and scaling up innovative practices, through the lens of the following essential implementation drivers (Fixsen and Blasé, 2010):

- <u>Recruitment and Selection</u>
  The purpose of recruitment and selection is to choose the right people for the right positions. This requires thinking about expectations and necessary pre-requisites. If done well, selection improves the likelihood of retention after "investment". Good selection improves the likelihood that training, coaching, and supervision will result in implementation. Consideration should be given to who is best qualified to carry out the practices due to the needed *skill set* as well the *desired characteristics or values* for the role the person will serve (e.g., commitment to shared goals, willingness to learn, etc.)

- Training
  The purpose of training is to support "buy-in", knowledge acquisition, and skill development. Training must be timely (e.g., training occurs before the person attempts to or is required to use the new program or practice), is grounded in theory of adult learning, and is skill-based. Pre- and post- data as well as outcome data should be collected and analyzed. Trainers should be trained and coached, and fidelity measures collected and analyzed (e.g. schedule, content, processes, qualification of trainers).
- Supervision and Coaching
  Coaching is designed to ensure fidelity in the implementation of a given initiative or assignment. Coaching helps to develop and sustain clinical and practice judgment. Coaching provides feedback to selection and training processes, and uses multiple sources of information for feedback. Coaching is based on multiple sources of information.
- Performance Assessment
  Performance Assessment is intended to measure fidelity and to ensure implementation. It reinforces staff and builds on strengths. It gives feedback to the organization on the functioning of recruitment and selection practices, training programs (pre and in-service), supervision and coaching systems, and interpretation of outcome data. It is the formative assessment of the system that allows for mid-course correction, in response to reliable data (standardized protocols, trained data gatherers).
- Decision Support Data Systems
  Decision support data systems are the organization's processes for systematically collecting and using both *process data*, such as fidelity measures over time and across practitioners, as well as *outcome data*. Data can also be collected and used regarding the quality of the drivers. The purpose of the data system is not as a repository of information but as a source of information for decision-making and continuous quality improvement. The purposes are to make a difference for students, to provide information to assess effectiveness of educational practices, to analyze the relationship of fidelity to outcomes, to guide further program development and support continuous quality improvement, and to celebrate successes.
- Facilitative Administration
  Facilitative administration is about support services and leadership that proactively looks for ways to make high quality work by practitioners feasible and routine. The organization provides leadership and makes use of a range of data inputs to inform decision making, support the overall processes, and keep staff organized and focused on the desired clinical and program outcomes. The purpose of administration that is facilitative is to ensure that all the essential components of implementation are installed, available, integrated and of the highest quality, with timely support to practitioners.
- Systems Interventions
  Systems interventions are strategies to work with external systems to ensure the availability of the financial, organizational, and human resources required to support the work of the practitioners. Such systems alignment and intervention is critical since even the best program or practice will not survive if the funding, regulatory, and policy climate is not hospitable. The goal of systems intervention is to identify and eliminate or reduce barriers, or to enhance and sustain those policies and regulations that facilitate the work at hand. The purpose is to create an environment and a set of conditions that supports the new way of work. Multiple "champions" and "opinion leaders" embrace the work and promote it.
- Leadership

Designated leaders have the adaptive skills and the technical skills to support the work that must be done. Leaders identify, develop, and support the policies that must be changed or created to achieve the desired outcomes. Leaders have the necessary degree of technical knowledge about the program or practice to support it (i.e., they understand it). Leaders are also adaptive in responding to the changing dynamics of the environment around them while keeping a focus and commitment to sustaining the program or practice. Administration aligns policies and procedures to facilitate the new way of work internally, and provides leadership in addressing changes needed in external systems.

To adequately address the needs of Priority Schools, the NDE will require a district to assure that it will implement the selected intervention or interventions at a priority school for at least three years. Intervention strategies that will be implemented at the school and district levels include, but are not limited to, the following:

School Leadership

- The district will be required to review the performance of the current principal and either 1) replace the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure effective leadership, or 2) demonstrate to the SEA that the current principal has a demonstrated record of increasing student achievement and has the ability to lead the reform effort. The principal will be granted operational flexibility in areas of scheduling, staff, budget, and curriculum;
- With regard to Building Reform Leadership Capacity, the NDE is currently using SIG administrative set aside funds to provide intensive turnaround leadership identification and professional support required to successfully implement either the turnaround or transformation models under the SIG program. This focused support is provided through the University of Virginia's two-year School Turnaround Specialist Program (UVA-STSP). In collaboration with the Southwest Comprehensive Center (SWCC) at WestEd, the UVA is building Nevada's regional capacity to provide this focused support to potential and practicing turnaround leaders that will be needed to serve at identified priority and focus schools. Continued partnership with UVA-STSP and SWCC will exist to sustain and grow greater capacity of school, district, and State leadership for turnaround efforts

Effective Teachers

- School districts will be required to measure the effectiveness of existing staff and retain only those who are determined to be able to be successful in a turnaround environment as well as who have proven to be effective under the newly emerging teacher evaluation system described in Principle 3 of this application, with forthcoming State regulations to define educator evaluations to determine effectiveness. In the interim, districts will be required to use at any priority school, locally-developed or adopted competency evaluation models currently being implemented at SIG-served transformation-model schools;
- As described in detail in Principle 3, teachers will be provided with the means to share and learn effective practices to increase student achievement. In keeping with the turnaround principles described below, much of the success of teachers will hinge on their access to and engagement in rigorous professional development
- Nevada requires that the following competencies for teachers and leaders be used by current School Improvement Grant (SIG) funded districts and schools when hiring for positions at SIG-served turnaround and transformation model schools. These same competencies will

be required for use at priority schools. UVA has established four cluster areas, with embedded indicators in each cluster, relative to the competencies and expectations necessary for teacher and leader success in turning around Priority Schools. These cluster areas are described here:

1. Driving for Results Cluster

   - *Leaders*: This cluster of competencies is concerned with the turnaround leader's strong desire to achieve outstanding results and the task-oriented actions required for success. Major actions include setting high goals for the organization and making persistent, well-planned efforts to achieve these goals despite barriers. Significant competence is this cluster will achieve school performance via a relentless focus on learning results through the indicators below.

   - *Teachers*: This cluster of competencies is concerned with the turnaround teacher's strong desire to achieve outstanding student learning results and the task-oriented actions required for success. Major actions include setting high goals for oneself and one's students; making persistent, well-planned efforts to achieve these goals despite barriers and resistance; holding others accountable for doing their part to achieve success; and putting in extra effort to ensure success when others fall short.

2. Influencing for Results Cluster

   - *Leaders*: This cluster of competencies is concerned with motivating others and influencing their thinking and behavior to obtain results. Turnaround leaders cannot accomplish change alone, but instead must rely on the work of others. They must use a wider variety of influencing tactics than most leaders – acting directive with subordinates when urgent action is essential, inspiring and visionary when discretionary effort of staff and others is needed, and influencing entirely through others rather than directly – as the situation requires. They also must address a complicated web of powerful stakeholders (staff, parents, unions, community, etc.) and resource providers (district office staff, special funders, management organization staff, etc.) to ensure support for – and reduce resistance to – successful change.

   - *Teachers*: This cluster of competencies is concerned with motivating others – students, other school staff, and parents – and influencing their thinking and behavior to obtain student learning results. Turnaround teachers cannot accomplish change alone, but instead must influence the work of others. They must use a variety of influencing tactics – inspiring students who have become resistant and apathetic from repeated failure, grasping and responding to unspoken student needs and motivations, and simultaneously supporting and prodding colleagues to collaborate on the path to school-wide success – as the situation requires. The relationships they form are for the purpose of influencing others to enhance student learning, not for the purpose of personal bonding.

3. Problem Solving Cluster

- *Leaders*: This cluster of competencies is concerned with thinking applied to organization goals and challenges. It includes analysis of data to inform decisions; making clear, logical plans that people can follow; and ensuring a strong connection between school learning goals and classroom activity. The thinking competencies are needed for higher levels of Driving for Results competencies and Influencing for Results competencies.

- *Teachers*: This cluster of competencies is concerned with teachers' thinking to plan, organize and deliver instruction. It includes analyzing data to determine student learning needs and next steps; considering alternatives for materials, methods, and levels of instruction; making clear, logical, step-by-step plans that both the teacher and students can follow; and clarifying the connection between school learning goals and classroom activity.

4. Personal Effectiveness Cluster

- *Teachers*: This cluster of competencies is concerned with the turnaround teacher's self-management of emotions and personal beliefs that affect student learning. Major elements include exhibiting self-control over behavior when faced with stressful, uncomfortable and unfamiliar situations; maintaining confidence in oneself and a willingness to keep improving despite the many small failures that are likely to accompany such a challenging role; actively embracing the constant changes needed to ensure student learning in a high-challenge, high-change situation; and holding and maintaining a strong belief in the human potential for learning and improvement, despite significant pressure to settle for less.

5. Showing Confidence to Lead

- *Leaders*: This competency, essentially the public display of self-confidence, stands alone and is concerned with staying visibly focused, committed, and self-assured despite the barrage of personal and professional attacks common during turnarounds. It includes both presenting oneself to the world with statements of confidence, putting oneself in challenging situations, taking personal responsibility for mistakes, and following up with analysis and corrective action.

Financial Incentives, Flexible Working Conditions, Retaining and Placing Effective Staff

- Financial and other incentives will be offered to instructional staff to recruit and retain them for priority schools. These include but are not limited to-
  - Scheduling options for class assignments that allow teachers flexibility for other assignments or coursework,
  - Opportunities for promotion and career growth that include professional development to support work as peer coaches, instructional coaches, and other assignments that allow for promotion and/or career growth.
- Human capital must be purposely leveraged. Therefore districts will be required to ensure that the most effective teachers and administrators are placed at Priority schools while ineffective teachers are prevented from being placed at such schools.

Instructional Programs Based on Student Needs, Identified through Data Analysis, and Aligned with Common Core Standards

For each Priority school, the district will be required to identify a new or revised instructional program for reading, mathematics, science, and writing that the research base shows is effective with high-poverty, at-risk students, and must demonstrate to the SEA how it is different from the previous instructional program. In addition, each priority school will be required to implement one or more of the following strategies to build capacity to effectively use student data to drive instruction and student interventions:

- Employ a full time data specialist at the school focused on implementing a system for teachers to develop and use common assessment data for improving and differentiating instruction funded by school-level Title I funds, including disaggregation of data by subgroups to assist in determining appropriate targeted interventions;
- Implement professional development for all teachers in formative assessment design and data analysis to improve and differentiate instruction; and/or
- Implement professional development to build the capacity of the principal to collect and analyze data for improving instruction and the skills necessary to develop a schedule and system for increasing teacher ownership of data analysis for improving instruction (PLC).

In addition, the school will be required to provide for faculty-wide review of data to determine areas needing further professional development.

To ensure that all teachers, including those that are general education teachers, have the skills and strategies needed to meet the needs of all students, including those with disabilities and/or are English language learners, professional development will be provided at Priority schools that includes use of proven effective strategies, such as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), co-teaching, and others with a strong empirical base to support their efficacy.

Increased Learning Time

In order to provide additional time for student learning, all Priority schools will be required to extend the learning day for student instruction. Additionally, the LEA will be required to ensure that the school's master schedule is redesigned to allow for common planning time for teachers. Priority schools will have access to Title I 1003(a) and 1003(g) School Improvement funds to extend the instructional time and common teacher planning time, and LEAs will need to apply for these funds to be used for this purpose within its Priority Schools Application. In addition, an LEA may be required to set aside a portion of its Title I, Part A funds for this purpose as well. In addition to ensuring common teacher planning time, additional time may be required for professional development focused on all teachers learning strategies for effectively working with students with disabilities and/or English learning needs, and for professional development for school leaders on effective scheduling to support learning for students and teachers.

There is also a strong commitment to extend the instructional day for students through the use of instructional technology and online access to supplemental instructional resources. One example in Nevada is MINES (Mathematical Instruction for Nevada Educational Support). MINES is a supplemental instructional tool available in both English and Spanish that is correlated to the K-12 Common Core Mathematics and Science Standards, and includes a visual dictionary of mathematics and science terms, practice activities, short assessments, and computer animated science experiments. Students receive immediate feedback on the assessment and practice portions of the

tool. Programs such as this one will be explored by school districts in order to effectively maximize extended learning opportunities.

Non-Academic Factors Affecting Student Achievement

Community-Oriented Services

For Priority schools, LEAs will be required to demonstrate ongoing community review of the school's performance. In addition, each priority school will be required to implement one or more of the following strategies to provide social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students:

- Provide professional development for family and community engagement staff designed to increase their skill level in developing academically focused engagement opportunities for families and the community;
- Conduct an audit of the current level of family and community engagement at the school using parent, teacher and student surveys to determine areas of strength and weakness as well as tools such as the Family Engagement Tool provided by the Center for Innovation and Improvement to establish policies and routines that will encourage ongoing family and community partnerships with the school;
- Implement professional development for all staff on the effective support of SWDs and ELLs and their families, and collaborate with parent groups representing students with disabilities, students with Limited English Proficiency and other gap groups to receive their input and ascertain the needs for individual students; and
- Engage in professional development for all staff on the development and implementation of effective academically focused family and community engagement.

School Environment

Each Priority school will be required to implement one or more of the following proven effective strategies to ensure a climate that is supportive of student academic and social growth:

- Implement Positive Behavior Supports;
- Implement a school-wide anti-bullying program;
- Hire a climate and culture specialist in the school funded with school-level Title I funds to work with the leadership, staff and families to develop or adopt a plan for creating a climate conducive to learning and a culture of high expectations;
- Arrange for an audit of the school from the Center for School Safety and implement the recommendations from the audit;
- Provide professional development for all staff and leadership to implement a comprehensive plan for creating a climate conducive to learning and a culture of high expectations; and
- Implement professional development to build the capacity of the leadership team to collect and analyze appropriate data and take appropriate actions for continually improving the climate and culture of the school.

Fiscal Resources Support

The NDE will use the same process for providing fiscal and instructional support to priority schools as has been used to implement Tier I and II schools under SIG. This support process includes an approved SIG plan based upon data analysis of the school's outcomes and practices, and ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the SIG plan. LEAs SIG plans, as approved by the NDE, have included a budget for each of the next three years to support implementation of the SIG plan. In a

similar approach, for Priority Schools, LEAs will submit a Priority Schools Application for any such school identified within its boundaries (provided such school is not a State-sponsored charter school) that may include pre-implementation activities to build the district's capacity to successfully implement the plan. Title I resources available to support implementation of these interventions at Priority Schools include SIG funds, Section 1003(a) funds as needed, and an amount equal to between 5 and 15% of an LEA's Title I-A and/or Title II-A allocation for the school year, following the identification of the school as a Priority school. An LEA may choose to set aside additional funds to support Priority schools. An LEA will be required to include a budget for additional funds with its Priority Schools Application.

2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA's choice of timeline.

The first set of Priority Schools are those schools identified as 1) among the bottom five percent of Title I schools in the state based on both achievement and lack of progress of the "all students" group, 2) Title I-participating or Title I-eligible high schools with graduation rates less than 60 percent over a number of years, or 3) currently-served Tier I or Tier II SIG school.

State statute currently requires that final decisions with regard to the designation of schools under the system of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), be made public no later than September of each school year, using data from testing in the previous spring. With approval of this waiver, legislation is expected to change in the 2013 legislative session.

This timeline is driven by State legislation. As authorized under statute, the NDE generates a testing schedule, which currently supports test administration within a window of 10 days before or after students' 150th day of instruction. Within 28 days following the completion of all test administration, data are generated from the contracted assessment vendor and subsequently forwarded to the NDE. At that time, the NDE then generates the accountability results, and provides preliminary data sets to each school district. ` This action triggers a reconciliation process that is finalized, in accordance with statute, to allow for publication of results no later than September 15th of each year. State statutes that address personnel decisions further substantiate timing for implementation of turnaround principles. State law requires that teachers and administrators be offered employment contracts no later than May 1st of each year. Turnaround efforts require that education leaders implement changes in staffing allocations and assignments at the school level, which will be implemented in the year following the schools' identification. This timing will support meaningful planning to assist schools in being ready for turnaround, by which school districts, in partnership with the NDE, can develop and implement plans to interview potential turnaround school principals against established competencies, and bring them into the decision making process with regard to human capital and other key considerations. Given the parameters of state statute, this timeline delineates the most expedient approach to implementation of turnaround principles and ensures that schools the identification of schools occurs as soon as possible after waiver approval.
The Priority Turnaround Plan, following the model developed under SIG, articulates what both the school and district will be doing to plan, prioritize, implement, progress monitor, and adjust implementation, as needed, for each of the elements of the Turnaround Plan. To ensure school

and community collaboration is developed as part of the implementation, activities may begin prior to the beginning of the school year during which the Priority Turnaround Plan will be fully implemented. Such pre-implementation activities may include but are not limited to:

- Holding community meetings to review school performance, discuss interventions being considered, and providing opportunity for input into the planning;
- Planning with certified and classified associations towards the recruitment and placement of staff at the Priority school who demonstrate the turnaround leader/teacher competencies, including the provision of financial incentives and opportunities for career growth.

The NDE will identify schools in the fall, and pre-implementation activities can occur any time thereafter in that school year. The following year will be the year that the school fully implements all components of the Priority Turnaround Plan. The NDE will work with districts in an especially concentrated fashion to help them understand the role of community engagement as well as the nature and timing of personnel decisions that must be made. The NDE will strongly encourage LEAs to engage in pre-implementation efforts so that the school is able to "hit the ground running" when it starts to fully implement its Priority Turnaround Plan in the coming school year. Strong technical assistance will be provided from the SEA to the LEAs as well, with regard to details for budget planning and fiscal processing and systemic monitoring efforts, including tracking student performance.

Applications will be reviewed on paper and through follow up interviews to determine potential success of the application's proposal. Following approval of an application, pre-implementation activities in the plan may begin immediately.

2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

The SEA gave much thought and careful consideration as to the predetermined conditions a school must meet to have the Priority identification removed. All Priority schools will be required to develop a Turnaround plan unique to the school that addresses all aspects of the school including, staffing, training, and leadership, to name a few. The SEA requires that the Priority Turnaround plans approved by the LEA for implementation at a Priority school support the idea of substantial (far above typical) academic gains over several years. So at a minimum to exit Priority status, all identified Priority schools must meet the two criteria listed below.

- Supports and interventions for Priority schools will be planned and implemented for a minimum 3-year period.
- A Priority school must develop a Priority Turnaround Plan requiring higher levels of monitoring and oversight from the LEA and the NDE until academic achievement (proficiency) and growth improves substantially.

Recognizing that elementary, middle, and high schools differ substantially and the Nevada SPF treats each in a slightly different manner, the SEA felt obliged to design exit criteria specific to

each school level. In addition to meeting the general exit criteria specified above, Priority schools must also meet the criteria specified below for the respective school level. In the case of Priority schools earlier identified as School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools, those schools which have shown significant progress in meeting the exit criteria listed below will be credited for successful implementation of an appropriate number of years toward the required three-year implementation period, not to include the year of planning. The following table delineates the identified Priority schools and the corresponding timelines dependent on whether the school is currently implementing one of the SIG intervention models or whether it will be required to implement the turnaround principles under the ESEA waiver.

Priority School Criteria	Number of Schools	Criteria for Identification as Priority School	Timeline for Implementing Turnaround Plan for Three Years		
			2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
D1-E	4	Currently-served SIG schools: three Cohort 2 and one Cohort 3 (Title I-participating high schools with grad rates <60% over a number of years)	• Cohort 2 in 2nd year • Cohort 3 in 1st year	• Cohort 2 in 3rd year • Cohort 3 in 2nd year	• Cohort 3 in 3rd year
D1	3	Title I-participating high schools with grad rates <60% over a number of years	May implement planning activities	1st year in implementation	2nd year in implementation
D2	1	Title I-eligible high school with grad rates <60% over a number of years	May implement planning activities	1st year in implementation	2nd year in implementation
C	1	Among the lowest five present of Title I schools in the State based on the proficiency and lack of progress of the "all students" group	May implement planning activities	1st year in implementation	2nd year in implementation

The three currently-served Cohort 2 SIG schools are all demonstrating progress towards full implementation of the turnaround model and are showing growth toward all of their goals and objectives as outlined in their turnaround plans. However, SIG schools previously identified which are not demonstrating significant progress shall remain in Priority status for the requisite 3-year period. That is to say, that all exit criteria must be met before a school will be removed from Priority status.

- An Elementary School* may exit from Priority status if:
    - The school meets or exceeds the 95 percent participation rate on the State assessment for reading and mathematics for each of the three most recent years the school is designated as "Priority, and
    - for the "All Students" group:

        - The school is above the bottom 15% of Title I-served elementary schools based on the Nevada SPF index points in reading and mathematics earned in both of the areas of Status and Growth during each of the three most recent years it is designated as "Priority", and
        - The school is above the bottom 25% of all elementary schools based on the Nevada SPF index points in reading and mathematics earned in both of the areas of Status and Growth during the most recent year it is designated as "Priority".

- A Middle School* may exit from Priority status if:
    - The school meets or exceeds the 95 percent participation rate on the State assessment for reading and mathematics for each of the three most recent years the school is designated as "Priority, and
    - For the "All Students" group:
        - The school is above the bottom 15% of Title I-served middle schools based on the Nevada SPF index points in reading and mathematics earned in both of the areas of Status and Growth during each of the three most recent years it is designated as "Priority", and
        - The school is above the bottom 25% of all middle schools based on the Nevada SPF index points in reading and mathematics earned in both of the areas of Status and Growth during the most recent year it is designated as "Priority".

- High School may exit from Priority status if:
    - The school meets or exceeds the 95 percent participation rate on the State assessment for reading and mathematics for each of the three most recent years the school is designated as "Priority, and
    - For the "All Students" group:
        - The school meets or exceeds the 95 percent participation rate on the State assessment for reading and mathematics for each of the three most recent years the school is designated as "Priority, and
        - The school is above the bottom 15% of Title I-served schools based on the NSPF Status index points in reading and mathematics during each of the three most recent years it is designated as "Priority", and
        - The school is above the bottom 25% of Title I-served high schools based on the NSPF Status index points in reading and mathematics during the most recent year it is designated as "Priority", and
        - The school has a graduation rate above the AMO for the most recent year it is designated as "Priority."

After meeting the above criteria, an elementary or middle school identified as Priority may not

exit Priority status until the school earns at least 16 points (30 possible points) from the status performance indicators and at least 21 points (40 possible points) from the growth performance indicators. For an elementary or middle school, this means that the school would have earned more than one-half of the 70 total points available under the Nevada SPF school index. The SEA asserts that if an identified school earns more than one-half of the available points, the school has demonstrated significant improvement.

A high school identified as Priority may not exit Priority status until the school earns at least nine points (20 possible points) from the status performance indicators and at least five points (10 possible points) from the growth performance indicators for the three most recent years. For high school, this means that the school would have earned at least 14 (over 46 percent) of the 30 total points available under the Nevada SPF school index. In addition, a Priority high school may not exit Priority status until the school earns more than 10 points (20 possible points) from the status performance indicators and at least six points (10 possible points) from the growth performance indicators for the most recent year. The SEA asserts that if an identified high school earns more than one-half of the available Achievement points for the most recent year and at least 40 percent of the possible Achievement points for the three most recent years, the school has demonstrated significant improvement.

The SEA asserts that the exit criteria (as modified from the original ESEA Flexibility Request) is rigorous and that schools meeting the exit criteria are clearly demonstrating significant progress in improving student achievement. In order to meet the exit criteria, schools will be demonstrating above average growth for "all students" and increasing the percentage of students meeting their AGP meaning that more students are proficient or on track to achieving proficiency.

*Note: The Nevada SPF currently utilizes the AYP Workbook and AYP Generator logic for assigning the school level for the purpose of school accountability. For accountability purposes, an elementary school (school level 1) may encompass any of the following grade spans: K-2, K-4, K-5, K-6, K-7, K-8, 3-5, 3-8, 4-6, and 5-6. A middle school (school level 2) may encompass any of the following grade spans: 5-8, 6-8, 7-8, and 7-9. Finally, a high school (school level 3) may encompass any of the following grade spans: 9-12, 10-12, 11-12.

The SEA conducted a simulation analysis to determine if the Priority school exit criteria described above were rigorous, ambitious, and achievable. For this analysis, the SEA calculated proficiency and growth (SGP) rates for the "all students" group for all schools with ten or more student records in each of the performance indicators for the 2008-09, 2009-10, and 2010-11 school years. A total of 505 schools fit the initial requisites to be included in this analysis, of which approximately 150 of the schools were Title I served. The SEA then awarded points to each school in a manner to replicate that utilized for the NSPF School Index calculation. Using the Priority school identification parameters proposed for the Nevada SPF, the SEA identified 11 schools (7 elementary, 2 middle, and 2 high schools) as "hypothetical 2008-09 Priority schools".

Five of the seven "hypothetical" elementary Priority schools increased the total number of growth points earned after being identified but none earned the 21 points needed in either of the subsequent years to exit Priority status. Only one "hypothetical" elementary Priority school earned more points from the proficiency performance indicator and this too was insufficient to meet the exit criteria described above. For the elementary schools, this basic simulation study

indicates good stability over time as none of the school index scores changed substantially when "normal" school improvement efforts were utilized. The data might suggest that minor growth occurred over the three-year period but the growth was not sufficient to move a substantial number of students into the proficiency category, which would be expected in this type of work. The SEA contends that this work supports the idea that the Priority exit criteria are rigorous and achievable with focused efforts.

Neither of the two "hypothetical" Priority middle schools made any progress, with respect to increasing the points earned in either the growth or status performance indicators. For the middle schools, the points earned from the growth indicators remained essentially unchanged, while the points earned from the status indicators decreased slightly. This work indicates good stability/reliability over time as neither of the school index scores changed substantially when "normal or typical" school improvement efforts was utilized. The SEA believes that the Priority exit criteria proposed for middle schools are rigorous and achievable.

Neither of the two "hypothetical" Priority high schools made any progress, with respect to increasing the points earned in either the growth or status performance indicators. For the high schools, the points earned from both the growth and status indicators were essentially unchanged. Neither of the high schools earned the required 14 points (9 status and 5 growth) needed to exit Priority status. This work indicates good stability/reliability over time as neither of the school index scores changed when "normal or typical" school improvement efforts was utilized. The SEA believes that the Priority exit criteria proposed for high schools are rigorous and achievable.

In summary, this work indicates a reasonable amount of stability or reliability over the three-year period for all school levels. This means that improvement in points earned as measured by changes in proficiency rates and median school SGPs will be brought about by substantial and meaningful school improvement efforts, not by accident. Also, the SEA contends that the exit criteria for Priority schools is rigorous and ambitions. As a result of this work, the SEA believes that Priority schools meeting the exit criteria are demonstrating sustained improvement to the benefit of the students.

2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

2.E.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State's Title I schools as "focus schools." If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

To be identified as a Focus elementary or middle school, a school must be among the lowest performing schools based on the NSPF index points for the "Subgroup" calculations for Adequate Growth Percentiles (AGP) in reading and mathematics in the current year.

For the elementary and middle school levels, the SEA uses the percentage of students at a school

meeting AGPs in reading and mathematics as a gap measure. The AGP is the calculated target a student must achieve if he/she is deemed to be on track to being proficient in three years or the eighth grade, whichever comes first. When a high percentage of IEP, LEP, or FRL students at a school are meeting AGPs, a high percentage of these "at risk" groups are likely to become proficient thereby reducing the achievement gaps. Schools with few students meeting AGPs are unlikely to bear witness to proficiency rate improvements and thereby maintaining a substantial population of non-proficient students. The SEA's gap analysis methodology is intended to identify the schools whose students are failing to meet AGPs, failing to improve upon subgroup proficiency rates, and failing to get students "on track" to proficiency.

While a Focus designation will be determined for both Title I and non-Title I schools, the level at which the process identifies the lowest-performing 10% of Title I schools will be the cut-off for identification of all Focus schools. For identification of Focus schools, as for Reward and Priority schools, an N-count of 25 will apply in order to assure statistical reliability.

To be identified as a Focus high school (Title I and non-Title I), a school must be among the lowest performing high schools based on the NSPF index points for the "Subgroup" calculations for graduation and proficiency in reading and mathematics. At the elementary and middle school levels, these analyses include the NSPF points earned in the subgroup (or supergroup, as applicable) analyses for the percentage of students who meet their AGP targets, which are derived from the use of multiple years of assessment data. At high school, these analyses include the NSPF points earned in the subgroup (or supergroup, as applicable) analyses for the 11th grade cumulative percentage of proficient students and graduation rate gap analyses over a three-year period. The 11th grade cumulative proficiency rate is, by definition, a multi-year analysis of academic progress. The level at which the process identifies the lowest-performing 10% of Title I schools will be the cut-off for identification of all Focus schools.

The SEA followed the process specified below to identify Focus Schools.

1. Determine the number of schools that are to be identified as Focus schools; for purposes here that means ten percent of Title I served schools. For 2010-11, the SEA identified 177 Title I served schools, meaning that the SEA would identify at least 18 Priority schools.
2. The SEA made the decision to identify a proportionate number of elementary, middle, and high schools based on the proportion of each school level of the total number of Title I served schools. This process resulted in the identification of 20 elementary, 3 middle, and 1 high school as Focus. In all, the SEA identified a total of 24 Focus schools.
3. Determine whether potential schools meet the n-count threshold of 25 students and exclude schools from further consideration that do not meet the n-count threshold.
4. Rank order (lowest to highest) all schools based on the total number of points earned from the Gap portion of the Nevada SPF school index scores.
5. Identify the cut-point for the bottom ten percent of Title I-Served elementary schools and flag the bottom ten percent of Title I schools as Focus. Flag all elementary schools meeting the above criteria and having a point value equal to or less than the cut-point as "Focus-NonTitle".

6. Identify the cut-point for the bottom ten percent of Title I-Served middle schools and flag the bottom ten percent of Title I schools as Focus. Flag all middle schools meeting the above criteria and having a point value equal to or less than the cut-point as "Focus-NonTitle".
7. Identify the cut-point for the bottom ten percent of Title I-served high schools and flag the bottom ten percent of Title I schools as Focus. Flag all middle schools meeting the above criteria and having a point value equal to or less than the cut-point as "Focus-NonTitle".
8. Flag the Title I (eligible or served) high schools with a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years not already identified as Priority.

Once a school is identified as a focus school, supports and interventions will be planned for a minimum 3-year period. These schools will continue to be judged using the same index system being applied to all schools. However, once identified, these schools will remain on "focus" status for the 3-year period.

As described above, the SEA proposes to identify Focus schools on the basis of points earned through the Nevada SPF, with the added criteria of an N-count of 25. As a means to determine whether the methodology is effective in identifying the correct set of schools, the SEA conducted an additional analysis to ensure that only the lowest performing schools with the largest achievement gaps are being identified as Focus. To this end, the SEA ranked all Title I served schools on the basis of ELA and mathematics proficiency. When the ELA and mathematics proficiency rates are considered in combination, the list of lowest performing schools mirrors the Focus school list generated through the use of the Nevada SPF. Further, when the subgroup proficiency rates are ranked for the Title I schools, the lowest performing corresponds favorably with the Focus school list (Table 2).

Regardless of the methodology utilized, the list of lowest performing schools in Nevada deviates little. While the specific ordering of schools differs somewhat depending on the methodology, the overall list remains unchanged. The SEA disclosed the list of lowest performing schools to LEA personnel and the LEA concur as to the accuracy of the SEA Focus identification. Based on this rudimentary work and consultation with the LEAs, the SEA asserts that it has demonstrated alignment between the performance indicators and the Nevada SPF.

The SEA recognizes the importance of ensuring that the methodologies employed to identify Focus schools has indeed identified the schools with the greatest gaps. The methodology for identifying Focus schools is described elsewhere in the Nevada ESEA Waiver Request. Also described elsewhere in the request are additional analyses the SEA conducted to demonstrate that the identified schools met the ESEA flexibility definitions.

As a means to demonstrate that the SEA's protocol for identifying Focus schools is sound, the SEA devised a series of calculations to show that as a group, the Title I schools identified as Focus are amongst the lowest performing schools in the state with substantial achievement gaps. The SEA Focus identification relies upon the percentage of students at a school meeting reading and mathematics AGPs (a criterion based measure built from normative SGPs). For the demonstration analysis, the SEA opted to calculate reading and mathematics proficiency rates for

schools and ESEA subgroups to show that (as a group) the Focus school identified for the ESEA Waiver are the lowest performing with the greatest subgroup gaps.

The SEA followed the prescribed methodology for identifying Focus schools and re-identified the lowest 10 percent of Title I schools based on the Gap analysis and labeled those Title I schools as *Focus1*. The SEA identified the next lowest (lowest 10 to 20 percent) 20 Title I schools using the same methodology and labeled those schools as *Focus2*. So for this demonstration, the *Focus1* group of schools is the lowest in the state based on the NSPF Gap analysis and the *Focus2* group of schools is the next lowest in the state based on the NSPF Gap analysis. The SEA then computed the average reading and mathematics proficiency rate for the "all students" group and the ESEA subgroups for the *Focus1* and the *Focus2* groups of schools. The intent is to demonstrate that (as a group) the lowest performing schools with respect to the Gap analysis are correctly identified as Focus schools.

Using the USED Focus school criteria, the SEA identified a total of 24 Focus schools. The SEA acknowledges that 24 schools are more than the minimum number of schools required for identification; however, when the SEA conducted the analysis, there were several schools that met the criteria. The SEA chose the more rigorous approach and has included all Title I schools meeting the criteria as Focus schools. For demonstration purposes, table 2.E.i.1 shows that (as a group) the 20 Focus elementary schools (described above as *Focus1* – the lowest performing schools on the basis of the NSPF Gap analysis) yielded an average reading proficiency rate of 38.71 percent which is approximately 8 percentage points lower than the next 20 schools (described above as the *Focus2* group) and more than 10 percentage points lower than all Title I elementary schools. For math, the Focus schools (*Focus1*) yielded an average proficiency rate of approximately 50 percent which is almost 8 percentage points lower than the next 20 Title I schools (described above as the *Focus2* group) and almost 13 percentage points lower than all Title I elementary schools. In every case, the average reading and mathematics proficiency rates for the identified Focus schools group is substantially lower than for any of the other groups of schools. The SEA contends that the Focus schools identified in the ESEA Waiver Request are in fact the lowest performing in the state with respect to Gaps.

Table 2.E.i.1: Reading and Mathematics Proficiency Rates for Focus Schools

	Focus1 ES*		*Focus2* ES**		All Title I ES		All ES	
	Percent Proficient		Percent Proficient		Percent Proficient		Percent Proficient	
	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math
School	38.71	49.92	46.48	57.76	48.99	62.74	58.72	69.06
IEP	16.69	26.13	22.75	32.43	23.80	46.56	30.84	43.93
LEP	32.45	47.30	37.81	51.18	42.83	60.66	46.99	63.03
FRL	36.87	47.81	42.65	54.43	46.67	61.13	51.51	63.25

*Note: *Focus1* ES = the 20 elementary schools (Title I) identified as Focus in the most recent Waiver request.
**Note: *Focus2* ES = the next 20 lowest performing elementary schools (Title I) that would have been identified as Focus if the identification of a greater number of schools was required.

The SEA did not compute a similar table for the middle and high schools due to the small

numbers of Focus schools identified at the middle and high school levels. If additional middle or high schools had been identified as Focus, the SEA would expect similar findings as those for the elementary schools.

As is described elsewhere in this request, the Gap analysis is conducted separately for reading and mathematics using the percentage of students meeting their AGPs. Meeting the AGP target represents a combined criterion-based and normative measure, as it is a measure of whether a given student's SGP (normative) is sufficient to indicate the student is "on track" to becoming proficient within three years or the eighth grade, whichever comes first. While reading and mathematics AGPs are derived from SGPs, the Gap measure is a good indicator of the percentage of students who are on track to proficiency in the near-future.

2.E.ii Provide the SEA's list of focus schools in Table 2.

2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the SEA's focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

Identification Timelines

Focus Schools that implement interventions in the 2012-2013 school year are identified and included in Table 2, using data from the 2010-2011 school year. Any future identification of Focus Schools will follow the same model.

This description is the same as that provided under 2.D.iv, wherein the timing and rationale for identification and implementation are driven by State legislation. As authorized under statute, the NDE generates a testing schedule, which currently supports test administration within a window of 10 days before or after students' 150th day of instruction. Within 28 days following the completion of all test administration, data are generated from the contracted assessment vendor and subsequently forwarded to the NDE. At that time, the NDE then generates the accountability results, and provides preliminary data sets to each school district. This action triggers a reconciliation process that is finalized, in accordance with statute, to allow for publication of results no later than September 15th of each year. State statutes that address personnel decisions further substantiate timing for implementation of turnaround principles. State law requires that teachers and administrators be offered employment contracts no later than May 1st of each year. Turnaround efforts require that education leaders implement changes in staffing allocations and assignments at the school level, which will be implemented in the year following the schools' identification. This timing will support meaningful planning to assist schools in being ready for turnaround, by which school districts, in partnership with the NDE, can develop and implement plans to interview potential turnaround school principals against established competencies, and bring them into the decision making process with regard to human capital and other key considerations. Given the parameters of state statute, this timeline delineates the most expedient approach to implementation of turnaround principles and ensures that schools the identification of schools occurs as soon as possible after waiver approval.
The NDE will use the same process for providing fiscal and instructional support to Focus

Schools as it implemented for Tier I and II schools using SIG funding and SIG professional development resources. This support process included an approved SIG plan based upon data analysis of the school's outcomes and practices, and ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the SIG plan.

The timeline for development and implementation of interventions for Focus Schools will begin following the annual analysis of State achievement test results and other selected metrics to determine annual school categorizations. Providing Nevada's waiver flexibility request is approved in time for implementation during the 2012-2013 school year, Focus Schools will be identified at the beginning of the year. The method used for identifying Focus Schools to implement 2012-2013 Focus improvement plans is be based on assessment and growth data from 2010-2011 for elementary and middles schools, and on assessment and graduation data for high schools. LEAs will submit a Focus Schools Application for any such school identified within its boundaries (provided such school is not a State-sponsored charter school) that may include pre-implementation activities to build the district's capacity to successfully implement the plan no later than November 30, 2012. Title I resources available to support implementation of these interventions at Focus Schools include Section 1003(a) funds, as well as resources under Title III and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Through this waiver application, it is also proposed to award 1003(a) funds to Focus schools based upon a formula to be utilized in meeting the needs of these schools will include a base amount of $30,000 with an additional $50 per student. In addition it is proposed that an LEA with one or more Focus schools be required to reserve an amount equal to between 5 and 15% of an LEA's Title 1-A and/or Title II-A allocation on a sliding scale to support the implementation of the interventions. An LEA may choose to set aside additional funds to support Focus schools. This set-aside will vary depending on the scope of the problem, the number of affected schools in the district, the number of students in the focus population, and the LEA's overall Title I, Part A allocation. This will enable the LEA to address needs in multiple Title I schools or to use Title I funding for LEA-wide support (e.g., instructional coaches or school networking activities). Nevada anticipates that by giving districts some degree of flexibility in how to use these resources, they will be able to maximize the benefit based on the unique needs of their Focus schools.

Applications will be reviewed on paper and through follow up interviews to determine potential success of the application's proposal. Following approval of an application, implementation of the plan may begin immediately.

Interventions for Focus Schools

By engaging in a continuous improvement cycle to manage performance, districts and schools can improve their effectiveness and outcomes for students. To support this purpose, all public schools are required to prepare and submit a plan to improve the achievement of students enrolled in the school. The NDE has developed SAGE, the Student Achievement Gap Elimination process, which is a research-based school improvement process to assist school and district improvement efforts. The SAGE process includes a complete analysis of the data, identification of key strengths and priority concerns, root cause analysis of each concern, and the identification of solutions resulting in a focused plan that includes action steps, timelines, an aligned allocation of resources, accountability, and monitoring measures. The SAGE process is an inquiry-based approach to school improvement planning and implementation that starts with a

robust needs assessment. Accordingly, the Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Schools (NCCAT-S) has been designed (and is described in more detail below). The NCCAT-S generates the qualitative data from which root cause analysis can be conducted through the SAGE process. In addition to relevant qualitative data, schools also must analyze their quantitative performance data. In years past this has included AYP data and other assessment data. These data sets will continue to be analyzed through the SAGE process under the new system of accountability afforded through this flexibility request. Performance against Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) will remain an important data set for analysis that guides inquiry based solution development, and will be critical in driving incentives and supports for all Nevada schools.

School districts with schools that are identified as Focus Schools will be required to conduct or provide support to conduct the Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Schools (NCCAT-S) at these schools. The NCCAT-S and accompanying support documents provide the tools and framework for analyzing school policies and practices in three primary areas: Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Accountability, and Leadership. The NCCAT-S is built upon a meta-analysis of the research on school improvement, and was created by the NDE in collaboration with school districts, and with support from RMC Research via the Southwest Comprehensive Center (SWCC) at WestEd, as well as the Center for Innovation and Improvement (CII). The NCCAT-S has proven beneficial in schools' and districts' efforts to identify schools' successes and needs. From this rich set of data, root cause analysis is possible to generate information useful for improvement planning and implementation.

Under the State's current differentiated system of school supports, these various data sets including AMOs, student growth, NCCAT-S, local data, and other data as appropriate and as analyzed through the SAGE process, then set the stage for school districts to propose to the NDE an appropriate, targeted intervention to assist the school in improving. Especially relevant is that this system of checks and balances works to ensure that the needs of targeted student subpopulations are met through the focused interventions process. This system is grounded in the idea that if schools had the internal expertise or other necessary resources to succeed, they would be doing so independently, and that in order to improve, focused support is necessary. Therefore, a framework has been created which specifies the interventions that a school district can request in order to support the school in growing their student achievement. The following table articulates the proposed timeline for determining the focused interventions proposed and then approved for focus schools, and the process for awarding 1003(a) funds to support those interventions.

The table below describes the timeline for identification and approval of Focus schools relative to their implementation of approved interventions. Cohort 1 schools are those that are included in this Flexibility Request and that will implement interventions in the 2012-2013 school year. Cohort 2 schools are those that will be identified secondarily and will implement interventions in the 2015-2016 school year. Cohort 1 schools include the requisite number of schools, per Flexibility requirements, for implementation of interventions to be undertaken in the fall of 2012.

Proposed Timeline for Development and Approval of Focus School Interventions	
July 2012	Identification of Cohort 1 Focus schools based upon data from the 2010-11 school year
September 21, 2012	• Dissemination of Focus School Application, Budget Plan, and Request for 1003(a) funds (based on proposed formula) to support interventions at Cohort 1 Focus schools • Collaborate with LEAs on development of intervention(s) as outlined in the Focus School Application, and issue SEA approval through an iterative process that ensures alignment between data-based needs and interventions to be implemented (including requiring changes in district-proposed plans when the SEA identifies such as necessary) • Collaborate with LEAs on alignment of additional funding to support interventions at focus schools (up to 15% of its Title I-A allocation, and resources available under Title III and IDEA, as applicable)
October 5, 2012	Deadline for submission of Focus School Application, Budget Plan, and Request for 1003(a) funds to NDE for Cohort 1
October 15, 2012	Award 1003(a) funds to LEAs to support implementation of interventions at Cohort 1 Focus schools
November 30, 2012	Deadline by which all interventions at Cohort 1 Focus schools must have begun to be implemented for 2012-13
January-May 2013	Bi-monthly onsite visits to Cohort 1 Focus schools to monitor first year of implementation of interventions
June 2013	• Dissemination of Focus School Application, Budget Plan, and Request for 1003(a) funds (based on proposed formula) to support interventions at Cohort 1 Focus schools' year 2 of implementation • Collaborate with LEAs on development and approval of intervention(s) as outlined in the Focus School Application • Collaborate with LEAs on alignment of additional funding to support interventions at focus schools (up to 15% of its Title I-A allocation, and resources available under Title III and IDEA, as applicable)
October 1, 2013	Deadline for submission of Focus School Application, Budget Plan, and Request for 1003(a) funds to NDE for Cohort 1 year 2 of implementation.
October 2013	Review Focus School Application and Plans utilizing School Plan Rubric for completeness and adherence to the requirements of the Focus School Plan, Interventions, and funding support.
November 1, 2013	Award 1003(a) funds to LEAs to support implementation of interventions at Cohort 1 Focus schools' year 2 implementation.
September – December 2013	Submission of Fall on-line monitoring reports from Cohort 1 Focus Schools-due within this timeframe.

January-February 2014	Mid-Year Onsite visits of Cohort 1 Focus Schools to monitor implementation of interventions including use of Implementation Rubric (field test).
February – May 2014	Submission of Spring on-line monitoring reports from Cohort 1 Focus Schools due within this timeframe.
April 2014	• NDE Dissemination of Focus School Application, Budget Plan, and Request for 1003(a) fund to support interventions at Cohort 1 Focus Schools – Year 3 Implementation • Collaborate with LEAs on development and approval of interventions(s) as outlined in the Focus School Application • Collaborate with LEAs on alignment of additional funding to support interventions at focus schools (up to 15% of its Title I-A allocation, and resources available under Title III and IDEA, as applicable).
May- June 2014	End-of-Year Onsite visits of Cohort 1 Focus Schools to monitor implementation of interventions including use of Implementation Rubric (field test)
July 1, 2014	Deadline for submission of Focus School Continuing Application, Budget Plan and Request for 1003(a) funds from LEA to NDE for Cohort 1 – Year 3 Implementation
July 2014	Review Focus School Application and Plans utilizing School Plan Rubric for completeness and adherence to the requirements of the Focus School Plan, Interventions, and funding support
August 1, 2014	Award 1003(a) funds to LEA to support implementation of interventions at Cohort 1 focus schools for Year 3 implementation
September – December 2014	Submission of Fall on-line monitoring reports from Cohort 1 Focus schools due within this timeframe.
January 2015	Mid-Year Onsite visits of Cohort 1 Focus Schools to monitor implementation of interventions including use of Implementation Rubric
February – May 2015	Submission of Spring on-line monitoring reports from Cohort 1 Focus Schools due within this timeframe.
April 2015	Begin preliminary work with Cohort 1 schools relative to meeting or not meeting exit criteria to determine preliminary planning for continuation of Focus School status or for Exit status.
May – June 2015	End-of-Year Onsite visits of Cohort 1 Focus Schools to monitor implementation of interventions including use of Implementation Rubric.
July 2015	Cohort 1 of Focus Schools - administration of exit criteria to determine exiting Focus Schools.
July 2015	Cohort 2 of Focus Schools identified.

The NDE will work with the LEAs with Focus schools to develop focused interventions as described below and award 1003(a) funds and work with LEAs on the reservation of Title I-A set

aside of funds to allow for implementation of these focused interventions no later than November 30, 2012 as stated in Principle 2.E.iii. Such changes include a move away from the use of AYP data and the use of the NSPF starting in school year 2013-2104.
For Focus Schools, the school district will provide ongoing support to the school staff throughout data and root cause analyses, targeted improvement planning, and selection of a requested intervention(s) to address the needs identified, and shared responsibility for ongoing monitoring of the intervention efforts at the school. This greater attention by the school district in the implementation and support of the school's interventions will provide for adjustments within the delivery of the intervention(s) and assist the school in closing the achievement gaps for its identified population. The following interventions can be used singly, when the root cause analysis and inquiry process (which includes the NCCAT-S) demonstrate the appropriateness of such an approach, or can be combined in any formation when multiple solutions are necessary to create the changes needed to address specific student performance concerns. Sometimes such concerns are targeted specifically at a given subpopulation(s); in other cases root cause analysis reveals concerns that are more systemic, such as a lack of alignment between standards curriculum, and instruction across the school.

All of the interventions listed below must align with the needs of the school identified in the comprehensive needs analysis, specifically as those needs relate to the low-income, English language learners and/or children with disabilities. Nevada Focus Schools are able to select from a list of interventions that are specifically targeted towards addressing the issues that hamper a school's ability to meet the needs of challenging populations. These interventions are aligned with elements of the NCCAT-S and therefore can be directly aligned to the needs of the school. Additionally, these research-based interventions align with the SIG/Priority interventions, allowing the system of support to be seamless. This approach includes implementing one or more of the following interventions:

Tiered Interventions

- Needs Analysis that Leads to Interventions Tied to Specific Subgroup Needs
- Providing Strong Leadership
- Ensuring Teachers are Effective
- Redesigning the School Day, Week, or Year
- Strengthening the School's Instructional Program
- Using Data to Inform Instruction
- Establishing a Safe School Environment
- Providing Mechanisms for Family and Community Engagement

Undergirding the success of each of these interventions is the accurate identification of the problem to be addressed and the selection of the appropriate and correct corresponding solution (i.e., sound root cause analysis and inquiry process). Accordingly, when the LEA submits its plan to the NDE requesting a specific intervention (and when appropriate, also asking for fiscal resources to assist in implementing the intervention), the LEA must include in its plan a detailed description of the root cause analysis and inquiry process that was undertaken to demonstrate the appropriateness of the targeted intervention.

This array of interventions is specifically crafted to address the differentiated needs of the schools

that will be identified as Focus Schools, including considerations as to school demographics such as student population characteristics, size, age/grade-levels, etc., as well as data-driven improvement needs, such as targeted populations' vs all-students learning needs, school culture, leadership, etc.

2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

The SEA carefully considered the predetermined conditions a school must meet to exit Focus school status. All Focus schools will be required to develop a school improvement plan unique to the school that addresses all aspects of the school contributing to the low student performance. Schools will participate in the SAGE process (previously described), which includes data analysis, key strengths/needs assessment, root cause analysis, and the identification of solutions resulting in a focused plan that includes action steps, timelines, an aligned allocation of resources, accountability, and monitoring measures. The SEA will require that the SAGE plan at a Focus school support the idea of substantial increases in academic achievement for the targeted subgroup(s). So at a minimum to exit Focus status, all identified Focus schools must meet the two criteria listed below.

- Supports and interventions for Focus schools will be planned and implemented for a minimum 3-year period.
- A Focus school must develop and implement a SAGE plan requiring higher levels of monitoring and oversight from the LEA and the NDE until achievement gaps are substantially reduced.

The SEA felt obliged to design exit criteria specific to elementary, middle, and high schools because of the different ways in which each may be identified. In addition to meeting the general exit criteria specified above, Focus schools must also meet the criteria specified below for the respective school level.

- An Elementary School may exit from Focus status if:
    - The school meets or exceeds the 95 percent participation rate on the State assessment for reading and mathematics for each of the three most recent years the school is designated as "Focus", and
    - For the identified subgroup or supergroup, the subgroup/supergroup is above the bottom 25% of all Title I-served elementary schools based on the Nevada SPF index points in reading and mathematics earned in the AGP gap analysis during the most recent three years it is designated as "Focus".

- A Middle School may exit from Focus status if:
    - The school meets or exceeds the 95 percent participation rate on the State assessment for reading and mathematics for each of the three most recent years the school is designated as "Focus", and

- For the identified subgroup or supergroup, the subgroup/supergroup is above the bottom 25% of all Title I-served middle schools based on the Nevada SPF index points in reading and mathematics earned in the AGP gap analysis during the most recent three years it is designated as "Focus".

- A High School may exit from Focus status if:
  - The school meets or exceeds the 95 percent participation rate on the State assessment for reading and mathematics for each of the three most recent years the school is designated as "Focus, and
  - For the identified subgroup or supergroup:
    - The targeted subgroup/supergroup is above the bottom 25% of Title I-served high schools based on the NSPF Status index points in reading and mathematics proficiency during the three most recent years it is designated as "Focus", and
    - The targeted subgroup/supergroup is above the bottom 25% of Title I-served high schools based on the NSPF Status index points in graduation during the three most recent years it is designated as "Priority", and
    - The subgroup/supergroup has a graduation rate above the bottom 25% of Title I-served high schools for the most recent year it is designated as "Focus."

After meeting the above criteria, an elementary school identified as Focus may not exit Focus status until the school earns five or more points (10 possible points) from the Reading Gap performance indicators and five or more points (10 possible points) from the Mathematics Gap performance indicators. For an elementary school, this means that the school would have earned one-half of the 20 total points allocated to the Gap analysis portion of the Nevada SPF school index for the three most recent years.

A middle school identified as Focus may not exit Focus status until the school earns more than 4 points (10 possible points) from the Reading Gap performance indicators and more than 3 points (10 possible points) from the Mathematics Gap performance indicators. For a middle school, this means that the school would have earned at least nine of the 20 total points allocated to the Gap analysis portion of the Nevada SPF school index. The SEA asserts that if a Focus identified school earns approximately one-half of the available points for the three most recent years, the school has demonstrated significant improvement.

A high school identified as Focus may not exit Focus status until the school earns four or more points (10 possible points) from the proficiency gap performance indicators and eight or more points (15 possible points) from the graduation gap performance indicators. For a high school, this means that the school would have earned at least 12 of the 25 total points allocated to the Gap analysis portion of the Nevada SPF school index. The SEA asserts that if a Focus identified high school earns approximately one-half of the available points for the three most recent years, the high school has demonstrated significant improvement.

The SEA strongly believes that the Focus status exit criteria (as modified from the original ESEA Flexibility Request) is rigorous and that schools meeting the exit criteria are clearly demonstrating significant progress in reducing achievement gaps of the targeted subgroup(s) over time. In order to meet the exit criteria, schools will be demonstrating above average growth for "all students" and increasing the percentage of students meeting their AGP meaning that more students are proficient or on track to achieving proficiency.

Technical issues centered around the fact that the AGPs on the data files that were useable were based on transitional cut scores for math creates an issue that prevents comparability. Therefore the SEA was unable to conduct a simulations study examining the effects of exit criteria for Focus schools as was done for the Priority exit criteria. The SGP growth model calculations for the AGP targets for previous years were calculated using the transitional math cut scores instead of the Board adopted cut scores taking effect in 2012-13, meaning that the AGPs were inherently low. The SEA believes that the simulation study for Priority schools provides indirect evidence as to the rigor of the exit criteria for Focus schools.

The SEA conducted a simulation analysis to determine if the Priority school exit criteria described above were rigorous, ambitious and achievable. The SEA calculated proficiency and growth (SGP) rates for all schools with ten or more student records in each of the performance indicators for the current and two previous school years. A total of approximately 150 Title I served schools fit the initial requisites to be included in this analysis. The SEA then awarded points to each school in a manner to replicate that utilized for the NSPF School Index calculation. Based on the points earned by each school, "hypothetical" underperforming schools were identified based on the first year of data and subsequent years were examined to assess the impacts of the exit criteria.

The rudimentary simulation work indicated a reasonable amount of stability or reliability over the three-year period for all school levels. This meant that improvement in performance indicators and points earned as measured by changes in proficiency rates and median school SGPs would be brought about by substantial and meaningful school improvement efforts, not by accident. In conclusion, the SEA contends that the exit criteria for both Focus and Priority schools are rigorous and ambitions. As a result of this work, the SEA believes that Focus and Priority schools meeting the exit criteria are demonstrating sustained improvement to the benefit of the students.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

Provide the SEA's list of reward, priority, and focus schools using the Table 2 template. Use the key to indicate the criteria used to identify a school as a reward, priority, or focus school.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

LEA Name	School Name	School NCES ID #	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
Churchill County School District	*Numa E.S. (1207)*	*320003000431*			*F*
Clark County School District	*Hewetson E.S. (2210)*	*320006000039*	*A, B*		
	Wengert E.S. (2259)	*320006000024*	*B*		
	Canyon Springs H.S. (2429)	*320006000567*		*D-1, E*	
	Del Sol H.S. (2430)	*320006000571*		*D-1*	
	Desert Pines H.S. (2609)	*320006000495*		*D-1*	
	Valley H.S. (2402)	*320006000107*		*D-1*	
	Western H.S. (2405)	*320006000114*		*D-1, E*	
	Chaparral H.S. (2409)	*320006000018*		*D-1, E*	
	Mojave H.S. (2424)	*320006000445*		*D-1, E*	
	Diaz E.S. (2085)	*320006000747*			*F*
	Fitzgerald E.S. (2143)	*320006000269*			*F*
	Roundy E.S. (2096)	*320006000269*			*F*
	Imagine 100 E.S. (2093)	*320006000670*			*F*
	Kelly E.S. (2226)	*320006000075*			*F*
	Craig E.S. (2223)	*320006000069*			*F*
	Lowman E.S. (2144)	*320006000270*			*F*
	Petersen E.S. (2289)	*320006000589*			*F*
	Paradise E.S. (2232)	*320006000085*			*F*

	Reed E.S. (2295)	320006000339			*F*
	Squires E.S. (2204)	320006000015			*F*
	T Williams E.S. (2242)	320006000104			*F*
	West Prep Sec. (2330)	320006000460			*F*
Elko County School District	*West Wendover H.S. (4607)*	320012000449	*B*		
	Owyhee E.S. (4206)	320012000727			*F*
	Owyhee J.H.S. (4506)	320012000684			*F*
Humboldt County School District	*McDermitt E.S. (7203)*	320021000153			*F*
Lincoln County School District	*Caliente E.S. (9201)*	320027000166			*F*
Lyon County School District	*Silver Springs E.S. (10205)*	320030000299	*B*		
Nye County School District	*Amargosa Valley E.S. (12106)*	320036000185		*C*	
Pershing County School District	*Lovelock E.S. (14201)*	320042000197			*F*
	Pershing County M.S. (14301)	320042000167			*F*
Washoe County School District	*Maxwell E.S. (16222)*	320048000202	*B*		
	Kate Smith E.S. (16225)	320048000227	*B*		
	Washoe H.S. (16506)	320048000209		*D-2*	
	Corbett E.S. (16215)	320048000242			*F*
	Hug H.S. (16504)	320048000238			*F, H*
	Mitchell E.S. (16228)	320048000241			*F*
White Pine County School District	*McGill E.S. (17203)*	320051000263			*F*
TOTAL # of Schools:			**6**	**9**	**24**

Total # of Title I schools in the State: 387 eligible and 177 served
Total # of Title I-participating high schools in the State with graduation rates less than 60%: 8

Key	
Reward School Criteria: **A.** Highest-performing school **B.** High-progress school **Priority School Criteria:** **C.** Among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on the proficiency and lack of progress of the "all students" group **D-1.** Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years **D-2.** Title I-eligible high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years **E.** Tier I or Tier II SIG school implementing a school intervention model	**Focus School Criteria:** **F.** Has the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup(s) and the lowest-achieving subgroup(s) or, at the high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in the graduation rate **G.** Has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, a low graduation rate **H.** A Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years that is not identified as a priority school

2.F PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR OTHER TITLE I SCHOOLS

2.F Describe how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA's new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

Nevada proposes to include all of its districts and schools in a comprehensive and coherent system of support and intervention that will allocate federal and State resources so that schools in the greatest need receive the greatest support (or strongest intervention). However, in addition to assessing the State's capacity to support its districts and schools, the NDE must also address local capacity: the ability of each district or school to improve. The State must then differentiate its supports and interventions accordingly. Several of the larger school districts have had the internal capacity or the ability to partner with outside entities to provide support to conduct more comprehensive needs assessments (focus groups in addition to surveys of teachers, parents, students, etc.), and robust formative and/or interim student assessment systems, while most of the smaller school districts are faced with proportionately fewer staff to continue focused school improvement support.

Within the Nevada School Performance Framework, AMO's will identify whole school as well as subpopulation performance and highlight areas of concern. The AMOs for 2011-2012 will be reset based on the approved AMOs within this ESEA Waiver Flexibility application. The AMOs referred to correspond to the 6-year reading and mathematics targets generated using the 50th percentile of schools as baseline and the 90th percentile of schools as the end target. These are not to be confused with the NSPF performance indicators used for point attributions toward the NSPF School Index score. For 2012-2013, schools will continue to be designated as in the past under Adequate Yearly Progress, with additional classification as Reward, Focus, and Priority schools. This will assure that all schools receive the appropriate scrutiny to warrant close examination and alignment of improvement planning during the transition year. Through implementation of the NCCAT-S, the school is examined against a rubric aligned with evidence-based effective instructional and operational practices across the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, accountability, and leadership. Within the areas of curriculum and instruction schools must determine specifically what are the policies, procedures, and implementation of same that contribute to or hinder the access of all students to receive effective instruction and instructional support.

To assist in determining district capacity to meet the needs of its struggling schools, the NDE will require the implementation of the Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Districts (NCCAT-D) when a district has one or more identified Priority or Focus schools, or has a large proportion of 1 or 2 Star schools. As with the implementation of the NCCAT-S, this may include assistance and support with conducting this needs assessment from an external entity with proven expertise in improving district academic performance.

Nevada continues a loose-tight relationship with its school districts that has proven effective in the past by allowing for a concentration of resources where the identified needs exist, including capacity. A loose-tight approach aligns with how a needs assessment for a school or district can be conducted,

dependent on level of autonomy earned:

- Self-assessment and implementation by higher performing schools using the systems and tools provided through the statewide system of support,
- For schools with a more urgent need to improve but some internal capacity, assistance in use of the same systems and tools provided by State, district, or external partners through on-site work and web-based support (coaching), which includes monitoring implementation, and/or
- For significantly struggling schools, an external team to conduct the diagnosis and assistance in developing the plan, with strong support for monitoring implementation.

NRS 385 also currently requires a differentiated response for supports or consequences as described above, in accordance with the conclusive data resulting from conduct of the NCCAT-S. Based upon research of successful school improvement efforts, support is provided through targeted interventions to promote effective and sustainable change. Results from the first two years of operation under this differentiated system of supports and consequences show not only improvement in student achievement, but also improvement in collaboration, leadership, and instructional practices at the schools. Nevada proposes to continue its differentiated support system under the ESEA flexibility waiver, and to expand its ability to address a school's and district's unique circumstances. For accountability reporting for school year 2011-2012, Nevada will report Adequate Yearly Progress for schools and districts as in the past, with designations ensuing consistent with past reporting and Nevada legislative statute regulating accountability analysis, reporting, consequences and supports. The 2011-2012 AYP analysis will be based on Annual Measurable Outcomes approved in this ESEA Waiver Flexibility application. The established differentiated responses or consequences required under NRS 385 will ensue as aligned with the accountability system, and Priority, Focus and Reward schools and districts will be subject to the consequences and supports as approved in this ESEA Waiver Flexibility application . During the legislative biennium 2012-2013, needed legislative changes will be addressed, with approval of such changes anticipated no later than June of 2013.

Many of Nevada schools that have implemented the Instructional Consultation Teams (IC Teams) model (Rosenfield & Gravois, 2000), Response to Intervention (RtI), Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD), Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), or High Quality Sheltered Instruction (HQSI) through the delivery of concentrated professional development have shown significant improvement in academic achievement with their students with disabilities and English language learning students. All of these strategies and protocols support foundational instruction in content standards to support targeted students to make meaningful connections and to make student learning more relevant and effective.

In the case of districts that have no identified priority nor focus schools, but do have other Title I schools that are identified as either 1, 2 or 3 Star schools, the district will be required to reserve an amount equal to between 5 and 15% of an LEA's Title I-A and/or Title II-A allocation to serve the identified needs of the schools. An LEA may choose to set aside additional funds to support other Title 1 schools identified as 1, 2, or 3 Star schools. Needs may be met through all of the options currently available to districts under NRS 385, either in combination or individually. The NDE has found that under the current accountability system in Nevada, the closer oversight the district has over a school's implementation of the school's improvement plan, the greater the likelihood that the plan will be implemented with fidelity. Following the loose-tight paradigm, districts will be required to differentiate the monitoring and oversight of all of its schools to align with the degree of

autonomy outlined in Nevada's NSPF. It is anticipated that those schools that are classified as 1, 2 and 3 star schools may very likely have demonstrated challenges with regard to specific student subpopulations. The same level of scrutiny will exist by the SEA relative to LEAs' plans with regard to root cause analysis and inquiry processes, to ensure that they have accurately diagnosed the issues, based on student achievement and other data, and chosen solutions that will ensure that appropriate instructional practices will be implemented for all students, and especially for any subgroups that have demonstrated low performance.

If a school is not making adequate progress and continues to operate under a priority improvement plan for more than three consecutive years at a level 1 status, the NDE and the district will reach agreement with regard to next steps. Interventions may include two options (1) restarting the school under an education management organization (EMO) or (2) closing the school.

Restarting a School

Restarting a school requires a district to convert and reopen a chronically-underperforming school under an EMO that provides whole-school operation services. The EMO could be selected through a competitive rigorous review process using a diverse-provider model. The diverse-provider model includes the following steps:

- District establishment of the standards their vendors must meet to qualify as eligible providers, including record of accomplishment in providing end-to-end solutions; evidence of ability to sustain program in demographically similar settings, including meeting the needs of specific subgroups; and demonstrated turnaround success.
- District development and use of an RFP process to create a pool of pre-qualified providers that meet the above standards.
- District development of a standard of expected yearly school improvement that any organization must reach before the operator can continue to be included in the pool of qualified providers for the district.
- District identification of the yearly progress needed before a case can be made that a low-performing school should be converted to an EMO school (i.e., identify how much progress is enough and how much is not enough).
- District policies requiring that an EMO is compensated after demonstrating it reaches contracted performance targets (based on interim and year end assessments).
- District development of an articulated agreement as to the role of the district and the school in implementation of the diverse-provider model, and review of the plan by the NDE.

School Closure

Under school closure the District closes a school and enrolls all students in a higher achieving school located within the same area. Prior to the school closure, the District will establish a dialogue with the families and members of the community regarding the intervention process.

2.G BUILD SEA, LEA, AND SCHOOL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

2.G Describe the SEA's process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:

1. timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;
2. ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and
3. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools.

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

As guided by the theory of action for development and implementation of Nevada's accountability system, the State will build capacity to improve student learning by aligning PreK-12 standards, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, personnel evaluation, and professional development. This work will entail making and implementing decisions about resource allocation, assessing and where needed, modifying current practices, and effectively utilizing and providing intensive professional development and technical assistance. As part of any improvement plan developed for any school, and priority or focus schools in particular, a monitoring plan will be required that evaluates both outcomes and the implementation process itself. The NDE will ensure sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority or focus schools, as well as in other struggling Title I schools, through fiscal resource and human capital allocation. This outcome will be supported through the intentional, scaffolded framework for support that targets resources where and how they are needed, to be both effective and efficient in the approach to school support. Fiscal support for priority and focus schools will include SIG funding and 1003(a) funding, and an amount equal to 5-15% of an LEA's Title I allocation and its Title II-A allocation. Funding sources for focus schools could also include those federal and state fiscal resources that are allocated to support the educational needs of the specific groups of students that have been identified as having the gaps in achievement. For students with disabilities, this could include funding available through either IDEA or state-funded special education units. If the group of students identified with the gap disparity is English language learners, the district will be required to set aside an amount equal to 5-15% of the LEA's Title III allocation to support interventions required to meet the needs of these students. Such supports for other struggling Title I schools will also include leveraging funding as needed that the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources.

To optimize the benefits of available resources, the NDE will align external funding from grants such as GEAR UP, the OSEP-funded State Personnel Development Grant, the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant, and grant support through assessment consortiums to further

leverage support in priority schools with significantly low achievement and in focus schools with large achievement gaps.

Given Nevada's previously-mentioned loose-tight relationship with its seventeen school districts and the newly formed State Public Charter School Authority, a district that has a large proportion of Title I schools identified as Priority and/or Focus schools will be required to set aside up to 15% of its Title I-A allocation for its Priority Schools and/or 15% of this allocation for its Focus schools for a total required set aside of no more than 30% of a district's Title I-A allocation. An LEA may choose to set aside additional funds to support other Title 1 schools identified as Priority, Focus, or 1, 2, or 3 Star schools Set aside of these funds, and the accompanying attention that will be paid to outcomes will foster concentration on improving all schools, including those that are Priority and Focus, and yet also on those schools that have been classified as 1 through 3 star schools. It also targets the consideration that schools underperform when district leadership and decision-making needs to be improved. All or most schools across a district cannot shine if significant improvement is needed at the district level, with regard to policies, procedures, and practices regarding any combination of issues associated with curriculum and instruction, assessment and accountability, and leadership. Targeting for assistance those districts that have a disproportionate number of schools underperforming, or performing at mediocre levels, is part of the state's comprehensive design to resolve issues and enhance capacity at the proper nexus. Dr. James Guthrie, Nevada's new State Superintendent will be pursuing legislative reform through an initiative tentatively called the *Silver State Learning Compact*, which will incentivize districts with financial rewards, to demonstrate high performance. This approach of rewards and interventions will then transcend schools and also engage districts, which is in keeping with the integral stakeholder value of alignment.

Learning again from the implementation of the SIG program, the NDE will require regular monitoring of the implementation of Priority and/or Focused Improvement Plans at both the school and district levels. Frequency of the monitoring will be determined by the intensity of the plan. Priority schools will be monitored quarterly with a combination of an online and on-site protocol. Focus schools will be monitored three times during the school year, again using the combination online/on-site protocol.

The higher levels of monitoring and oversight will be employed through the focus of planning for successful implementation by the district. Building on experience gleaned through the NDE's implementation of the SIG program over the past two years, a tightly focused district-level plan with clear timelines and frequent benchmarks for accountability are critical, so that strategies can be adjusted as data indicates the need, in order to support successful implementation. In addition, and again through previous experience with SIG, the NDE will develop and implement a Priority Turnaround Plan implementation monitoring system for each district that has one or more Priority schools that focuses on the essential implementation drivers listed below.

The role of the LEA in supporting Priority Schools will be essential. Therefore the NDE will work with district leadership in those districts that have identified priority schools to build district capacity to support rapid school turnaround. In order to determine if the school's leadership, infrastructure, and staff is adequate to engage productively in turnaround efforts, and the likelihood of positive returns on State resources and support in improving student achievement, the SEA will partner with districts to establish current school and district capacity for adopting

and scaling up innovative practices, through the lens of the following essential implementation drivers (Fixsen and Blasé, 2010): Recruitment and Selection, Training, Supervision and Coaching, Performance Assessment, Decision Support Data Systems, Facilitative Administration, Systems Interventions, and Leadership.

For Focus Schools, the school district will provide ongoing support and shared responsibility for ongoing monitoring of the intervention efforts at the school. This greater attention by the school district in the implementation and support of the school's interventions will provide for adjustments within the delivery of the intervention(s) and assist the school in closing the achievement gaps for its identified population.

For all Title I schools that are not identified as Reward, Priority, or Focus schools, NRS will still require development of annual School Performance Plans (SPPs) developed or revised using a research-based planning process — Student Achievement Gap Elimination (SAGE). The SAGE template required for use by all Title I schools in the development of their SPPs, except for Reward, Priority, or Focus schools, includes a monitoring timeline that requires oversight to ensure successful implementation of the plan. Districts will prioritize services to these Title I schools dependent on each school's identified needs.

Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, for all Title I high schools, graduation rates for all subgroups will be a required element within the revised School Performance Plan template. Previously graduation rates were included in the Nevada Report Card, but not specifically required in the School Performance Plans. In the School Performance Plan beginning with the next iteration for 2014-2015, high schools will be required to include graduation measures for all subgroups when completing the Comprehensive Needs Assessment page of the School Performance Plan.
It is anticipated that external providers will play a role in the implementation of targeted interventions in Focus Schools and in the delivery of services at Priority Schools as well. Accordingly, making sure that those providers have the capacity as well as proven history of success to support attainment of results will be critical. The NDE will partner with the Southwest Comprehensive Center (SWCC) and the Center for Innovation and Improvement (CII) to develop a rubric for LEAs to use in assessing potential external providers. This rubric will be a required component for LEAs to use in the evaluation of bidders who respond to Requests for Proposals to implement technical assistance and/or professional development at targeted schools, and for which Title I dollars will be used to support implementation of said interventions. Anticipated elements of the rubric will include an assessment of the external providers prior experience in working with schools that have similar student, school, district, and geographic demographics, as well as proven history of success in raising achievement for students who have similar issues in terms of learning challenges and learning needs, etc.

Gubernatorial and legislative supports to build capacity are also critical in a state like Nevada, in which resources are limited and needs are high. Solid relationships exist among the SEA, the LEAs and the legislature and Governor's Office to help focus the distribution of resources towards an aligned education reform agenda. For the first time in Nevada history, this spring the State Superintendent of Public Instruction will be appointed by the Governor, and next January, the State Board of Education will be reconfigured to reduce the number of members and move from an all-elected board to a combination of elected and appointed membership. More focus

than ever before is being placed on PreK-12 education by the Governor's Office, and with this focus has come a pledge from Governor Sandoval to support education reform that is aligned with the principles established in this application request. These endeavors are also supported by key philanthropic and business leaders from across the State, who have committed to leveraging support to assist the NDE and districts to deliver on the promises of aggressive school turnaround.

A crucial leverage point for building LEA and ultimately school capacity for all schools, but in particular those schools that have the greatest need, will build on the partnerships that NDE has strengthened over the years in working with struggling schools: the Southwest Comprehensive Center at WestEd, the University of Virginia's School Turnaround Specialist Program, Nevada's Regional Professional Development Programs, and the content centers and regional resource programs funded by USDOE. Through effective processes and evidence-based practices identified through work with these entities, the NDE and school districts have been investigating and developing ways to scale up successful supports as well as identify key components that are critical in building capacity at all levels. Work to date toward this end has proven effective.

Obstacles to and Leadership for Achieving Success in Principle 2

Implementation of the School Performance Framework

The NDE possesses a small ratio of SEA employees on a per capita basis, when compared to other state education agencies, which results in capacity issues regarding large systems reform. Accordingly, the NDE has a history of partnering with LEAs – in particular Clark and Washoe County School Districts. In order to implement the complex new Nevada School Performance Framework, continued collaboration will be essential. Accordingly, the NDE has engaged LEAs in discussions about the creation of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to ensure timely and meaningful exchange of data as well as technical conversations and partnership to deepen analyses and support validation processes. Also important will be State efforts to grow the IT infrastructure to support the new system. In January 2012, the NDE presented to the Legislative Committee on Education (LCE) and addressed this issue. In March 2012, a second presentation has been requested wherein the LCE has specifically asked the NDE to address issues with which legislative support is needed to implement Nevada's next generation accountability system.

Federal funding will be used to issue an RFP for the calculation and reporting changes associated with the new accountability system. Federal funding that will be leveraged includes the Title I 1% administrative set aside as allowed under ESEA, and Section 1117(c). This will assist with the obstacle of limited staff available to develop the infrastructure necessary for implementation of the new NSPF and provide for the production of reporting tools that will provide the necessary levels of disaggregation to assist with effective school improvement efforts. Additionally, NDE staff recognizes the complexity of the accountability system proposed within this document. In order to mitigate confusion associated with this complexity, a new contract proposed under this paragraph will include the development of a public reporting tool that will assist in the communication and understanding of this model.

Leadership to implement the classification system that undergirds the NSPF will be provided by NDE's Office of Assessment, Program Accountability, and Curriculum, with targeted support from the Office of Information Technology.

Implementation of Nevada's Differentiated System of Support
In order to foster implementation of a robust system of support that truly meets the targeted needs of the schools and districts in Nevada, access to the research on proven and emerging practices will be critically important. Accordingly, in light of the capacity issues described above, sustained engagement with technical assistance centers will be paramount for success. The system has been designed to support a continuum of support in which those schools with more needs are provided with more resources. This is a necessary and logical approach in general, and most especially so in a state that continues to face unprecedented economic challenges, resulting in a forecast of limited enhancements to state dollars for school improvement efforts.

Leadership to implement the differentiated system of supports and recognition will be provided by NDE's Office of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs.

Comprehensive Monitoring:
Important improvements have been implemented to increase the capacity of the Nevada Department of Education for reflection on progress, and to plan and implement system improvements.

Nevada oversees the progress of the entire system and of system elements through the monitoring activities of the ESEA Waiver Oversight Committee (EWOC) under the supervision of the Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement who in turn consults with the State Superintendent for Public Education. Feedback is sought from the educational community both through district leadership and district staff engaged in the implementation of the three waiver principles, and from numerous stakeholder groups.

Communicating about activities related to the implementation of waiver initiatives and eliciting feedback from the public at large as well as to the education field has been improved through the work of the Public Information Officer.

To further the Nevada Education Performance System, two important stakeholder groups have been established to provide feedback and to act as liaisons to their constituent communities as Nevada's Education Performance System evolves. These are the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

The Policy Advisory Group (PAG) is the stakeholder group which provides feedback to the Superintendent and ultimately to the EWOC on policy to support the Nevada Education Performance System and the ESEA Waiver Request. Membership includes education leaders such as district superintendents, State education organization leaders, and the State Board of Education; State and local educator organizations (unions); representatives from the business community; leaders of civic organizations; and advocates for English learners and students with disabilities.

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is the stakeholder group that provides feedback on the technical and operational issues that arise in implementing the Nevada Education Performance System, specifically the Nevada School Performance Framework. This group is made up of district accountability leaders and superintendent designees with expertise in the technical aspects

of accountability.

A vital and effective performance system monitors, evaluates, and plans and implements improvements on an ongoing basis. Such a complex system benefits from self-knowledge based on a spiraling process of reflection on outcomes and re-alignment of system elements. Stakeholders are the ultimate customers of a performance-focused education system. Just as they need understanding of the education system goals, objectives, and outcomes, those engaged in operationalizing improvements to the system must learn from the experiences of all system users.

Nevada will maintain its focus on further developing capacity as a system of support during this period of constructive disruption stemming from the implementation of new assessments in 2014-2015 (and beyond) by continuing the forward motion begun under the 2012 ESEA Waiver Request.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

3.A DEVELOP AND ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

Option A	Option B
☒ If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: • the SEA's plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year; • a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and • an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14).	☐ If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: 6. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students; 7. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and 8. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.

The purpose of public education in Nevada is to meet the learning needs of all students, so that they are college- and career-ready upon graduation from high school. Most basic to that attainment of success is quality instruction. Every student deserves an effective teacher; every effective school by design must have an effective principal. This purpose is supported by an integrated and comprehensive accountability system, which has two essential aims – to ensure educators meet professional responsibilities and to support capacity. Nevada's accountability system will reinforce the need for an aligned curriculum, improved teacher instructional practice, and assessments that are aligned and accessible so that all students can demonstrate progress — all leading toward improved student achievement.

Cascading levels of accountability and support must exist within a coherent and aligned human capital management system. One that is designed to identify, recognize and reward highly effective performance, that provides targeted, sustained professional learning opportunities and support, that scales up the use of effective strategies, and improves the performance of all individuals within the system. Such considerations touch upon all phases of an educator's professional experience, as they

progress through pre-service preparation, licensure, induction, school-based practice, evaluation, and coaching and professional learning opportunities. At each phase, evaluation, diagnosis of need, and specific feedback and planning must provide educators with the appropriate and rigorous content and pedagogy, as well as necessary data to inform and improve practice to facilitate student acquisition of college- and career-ready skills and knowledge. Over time, data about teacher and principal effectiveness must inform planning for improvement within teacher preparation institutions and within school and district programs for professional learning.

Nevada proposes a capacity-building system of evaluation of educators as a driver for system improvement. When expectations are clearly stated and educators receive useful feedback and are engaged in a formative process of improvement, the basis for effectiveness has been established.

In 2009 the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) submitted an application for the Race to the Top competition. While the State's application was not funded, Nevada stakeholders none the less committed to a comprehensive education reform agenda and embarked upon a path to ensure that requisite efforts associated with personnel evaluation and support were advanced to ensure that all students graduate high school college and career ready. Correspondingly, the State's focus on "educator effectiveness" has shifted from examining inputs associated with educator qualifications to a paradigm that evaluates educators on multiple measures, based in part on student academic outcomes. The NDE and its seventeen local school districts, as well as the State Public Charter School Authority, have collectively committed to the development and implementation of an overarching performance-based evaluation system. This commitment is grounded in Assembly Bill (AB) 222, which establishes performance evaluation and support system guidelines, and in AB 229, which further reforms requirements associated with tenure and promotion decisions for teachers and administrators.

AB 222 and 229 were passed by both houses of the Nevada Legislature and signed into law by Governor Sandoval in June, 2011. This legislation was codified in late spring by the Legislative Counsel Bureau and now exists in Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) at §391.460. A copy of the legislative bill is included in Attachment 11; a copy of the codified statute is located at: http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-391.html#NRS391Sec460.

Stakeholder Engagement to Build Momentum for Educator Effectiveness Reform

Coming forward with bipartisan support as well as embracing a major foundation of Governor Sandoval's education reform agenda, AB 222 sets forth the guidelines for rigorously evaluating personnel using multiple measures, assigning ratings within a 4-tier performance framework, and aligning professional development and support systems to ensure continuous improvement in instruction — all towards the end goal of realizing targeted student achievement results as measured by both proficiency and growth. The language in AB 222 was developed by a multi-disciplinary team of stakeholders from across Nevada. This work was spurred by the active engagement of a team of 20 Nevada educational leaders who participated in professional development and team collaboration time, beginning in October 2010. At that time, a team was created that included the designated leadership training administrator for the regional programs, the president of the state teachers union, and state and school district administrators with expertise in human resources, assessment and accountability, special education, English language learners, school turnaround, instruction, curriculum, and professional development. This team came together and began to attend quarterly functions established and coordinated by the Southwest Comprehensive Center

(SWCC). Four of the five states in the Southwest region have gathered each quarter since then, (having participated in seven cross-state cohort meetings to date), to learn from nationally recognized experts (e.g., Danielson, Goe, Heritage, Holdheide, Rabinowitz, Wenning, and others) and to process the development of our state systems in response to cutting edge research and emerging state models. It was from this nexus that Nevada legislation was crafted and moved forward with broader engagement of critical stakeholder groups.

During the 2011 legislative session, testimony was provided by teachers and administrators that helped shaped refinements to the final legislation that was passed into law. Additionally, to fine-tune additional details of the system, a Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) was created, with significant membership of teachers and administrators, as described in detail further below. The legislation was championed through bi-partisan leadership in the Assembly. Signing on from the beginning, the NSEA has been an active supporter of educator effectiveness reform. Teacher leaders have partnered with State and district as well as legislative policymakers to ensure that the system will be revised in ways that foster accurate practitioner classification, that generate rich systems for professional growth, and that inform human capital decisions in ways that are fair, valid, and reliable. The Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA) was also engaged in the passage of the legislation, providing testimony in favor of AB 222 and committing to active partnership in development and implementation of the State's new system.

The efforts described above for revising the ways in which effective (and less effective) teachers and administrators are identified are also bolstered through legislative action regarding probation and pay for performance. Under existing statute (NRS 391.3125; NRS 391.3127), teachers and administrators must be evaluated in writing at least annually for personnel who are post-probationary and at least three times per year for those employees still in probationary status. Such evaluations are required to inform personnel decisions including tenure and promotion, and will be further developed to ensure comprehensive improvement in areas associated with hiring, compensation, promotion, assignment, professional development, retaining non-probationary teachers, and the nonrenewal of contract personnel. Further, AB 229, as passed in the spring of 2011, provides additional stipulations with regard to probationary status, and requires that a post-probationary teacher who receives an evaluation of "minimally effective" or "ineffective" be evaluated three times in the immediately succeeding school year. Nevada law has also been changed to revise the probationary period from two 1-year periods to three 1-year periods, without a waiver of any of the probationary years. A probationary employee is now employed on a contract basis for three 1-year periods and has no automatic right to employment after any of the three probationary contract years. (Statute does provide that a probationary employee who receives notice that he or she will be dismissed before the completion of the current school year may request an expedited hearing pursuant to the procedures established by the American Arbitration Association or its successor organization.)

The Legislature was clear that *teacher and administrator performance matters*, and took the bold step of enabling boards of trustees to have more discretion in the dismissal of ineffective educators. A board of trustees of a school district which determines a necessary reduction in the existing workforce of licensed educational personnel must no longer base the decision to lay off a teacher or an administrator solely on the seniority of the teacher or administrator and may consider certain other factors. In addition to the possibility that educator evaluation may lead to sanctions, performance should also be rewarded. As mentioned in Principle 2, the board of trustees of each

school district must establish a program of performance pay and enhanced compensation for the recruitment and retention of licensed teachers and administrators. Implementation of such programs must commence by the 2014-2015 school year, and must have as its primary focus the improvement of students' academic achievement. The need to pay particular attention to implementation of educator effectiveness programs in at-risk schools is specifically called out in the legislation, which aligns well with the foundational elements discussed in this wavier application.

As drafted by the NDE, NSEA, and school districts, the final requirements of AB 222 created a 15-member Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC), with nominees coming from specified stakeholder groups and final membership selected by Governor Sandoval. As nominated by the NSEA, four teachers have designated spots (including cross grade-span representation and tested versus non-tested subjects and grades) and are active members of the TLC, and one TLC member is principal. (It is worth noting that this individual, the 2011 National Principal of the Year, is providing leadership for a Las Vegas middle school.) Additionally, the membership of the TLC consists of PreK-12 school district administrators, representatives of higher education, members of the regional professional development programs, parents, school boards members, and education policy makers including the NDE. Members of the TLC bring expertise in PreK-12 standards, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, personnel evaluation, and professional development, which are the critical elements identified in the Theory of Action driving Nevada's next generation accountability system. It is also relevant that two members are experts in special education, including a tenured faculty member in special education, as well as the State special education director for students ages 3-21. Two of the teachers on the TLC work in highly impacted schools and are experts in providing services to students who are English Language Learners, who live in poverty, and/or who experience very high mobility. One of these teachers, Ms. Barbara Barker, is the Vice Chair for the TLC. Dr. Pamela Salazar, whose leadership with the National Board Certification for Principals has led to invitations to provide testimony to Congress on these issues, Chairs Nevada's TLC.

The TLC is charged with creating recommendations that explicate the guidelines established in State statute. Explicit in Nevada's new educator effectiveness statutes is the charge to increase instructional capacity as measured in large part by gains in student achievement. NRS 391.460 (1)(a)(1) stipulates that all teachers employed by Nevada school districts (i.e., including those teachers who teach students with disabilities and/or English Language Learners) must be evaluated in accordance with the statewide performance evaluation system. The guidelines established therein mandate that teachers and administrators must be:

- Evaluated using multiple, fair, timely, rigorous and valid methods, to include evaluations that are based upon at least 50% student achievement data *(including growth data)*
- Assessed with regard to employment of practices and strategies to involve and engage students' parents and families
- Afforded a meaningful opportunity to improve their effectiveness through professional development that is linked to their evaluations, in order to ensure continual improvement of instruction
- Provided with the means to share effective educational methods with other teachers and administrators throughout the State.

The statewide performance evaluation system will be used in the evaluation of all teachers and site-based administrators. Consequently, specialists who work in a concentrated modality with targeted student populations such as special education and ELL students will be included in this system, as

will the high percentage of other teachers and specialists who provide services in grades and/or subjects in which no statewide summative data are formally gathered and analyzed.

The TLC was chartered in September 2011, began meeting in October, and has met monthly since then. The TLC has created a *Systems Guideline White Paper* that outlines the preliminary recommendations of the group. (See Attachment 11a.) The TLC presented an initial evaluation systems framework to the State Board of Education in June 2012, with final recommendations going to the Board by December 2012 for consideration and subsequent adoption of corresponding regulations no later than June 1, 2013. A copy of the materials presented to the Board are included in Attachment 1. As part of their charge, the TLC must develop and recommend to the State Board a plan, including duties and associated costs, for the development and implementation of the performance evaluation system, in keeping with the guidelines established by the State Legislature. The forethought in the legislation to mandate planning for implementation is indicative of the State's commitment to execute the system with rigor in order to realize desired outcomes for educator growth and student achievement. The NDE recognizes that the ESEA Flexibility Request required the submission of final guidelines for states' systems to USED no later than the end of the 2012-2012 school year. Respectfully, the NDE hereby submits these draft guidelines for review and commits to submission of final guidelines in December 2012.

The TLC has established beliefs, goals, and purposes to guide system development, and which are instructive in understanding the State's operational paradigm. These beliefs are aligned with the foundational values upon which the State's new overarching accountability system is built. The following beliefs support an underlying vision that effective teachers and administrators must be developed and supported so that all students master standards and attain the essential skills needed to graduate high school ready for college and career success. Accordingly, the TLC believes that:

- Educators will improve through effective, targeted professional development that informs and transforms practice.
- An evaluation system will include clear expectations for both professional practice and student growth as well as fair, meaningful, and accurate feedback.
- The evaluation process will engage stakeholders in a collaborative process that informs practice and positively influences the school and community climate.
- The evaluation system must include student, teacher, and administrator achievement and performance as measured over time using multiple measures, multiple times, over multiple years.
- Educator evaluations must be consistent with and supported by State, district, and school-level systems.
- A consistent and supportive teacher and administrator evaluation system includes continuous and measureable feedback to improve performance of students, teachers, administrators, and the system.
- The evaluation system is a part of a larger professional growth system that continually evolves and improves to support the teachers and administrators that it serves.

To improve performance for all educators and students, Nevada is working to develop and implement an accountability framework that:

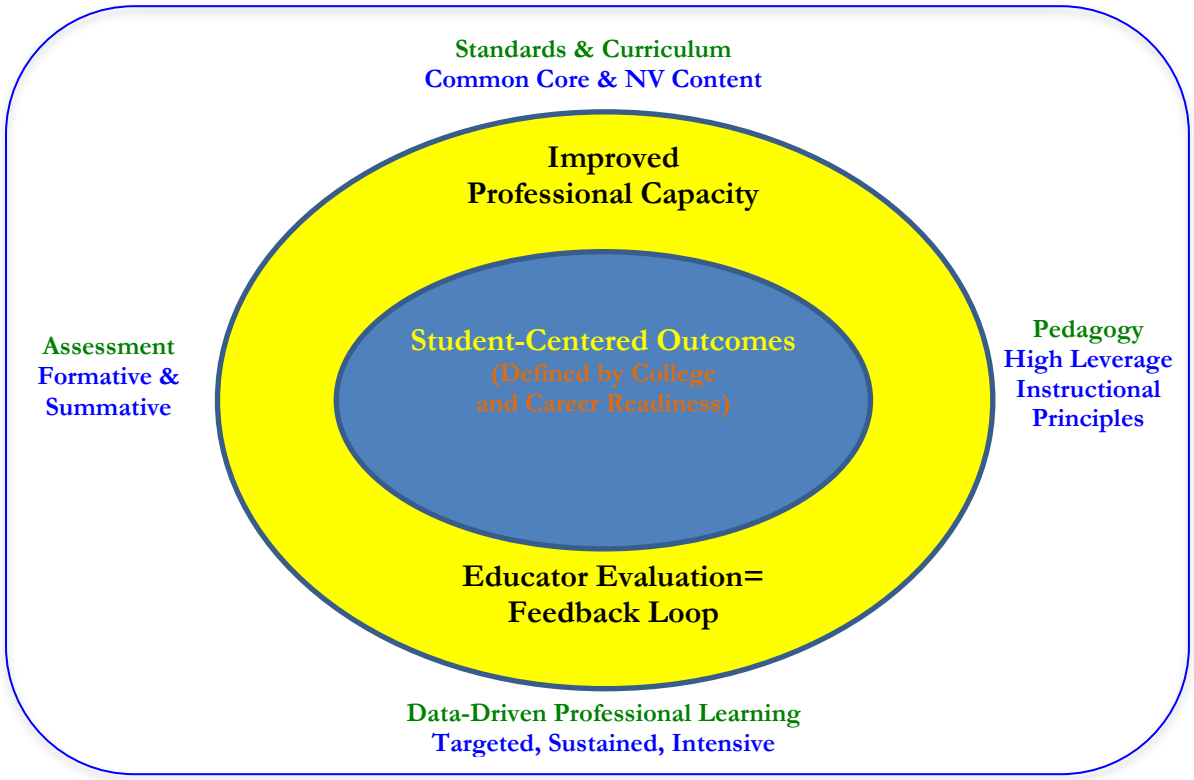
- Ensures student learning and growth
- Improves educators' capacity to utilize effective instructional practices

- Informs human capital decisions based on a professional growth system
- Engages stakeholders in the continuous improvement and monitoring of a professional growth system.

These beliefs and goals then provide directionality for the overall purpose of Nevada's educator evaluation framework, which is to identify effective instruction and leadership and to establish criteria to determine:

- Which educators are helping students meet achievement targets and performance expectations *(supports goals 1 & 4)*
- Which educators effectively engage families (*supports goals 1 & 2)*
- Which educators collaborate effectively (*supports goals 1, 2, & 3*)
- The professional development needs of teachers & administrators (*supports goals 1, 2, 3 & 4*)
- Human capital decisions including rewards and consequences (*supports goal 3*)
- Which educators use data to inform decision making (*supports goals 1, 2 & 4*)

The TLC has established that systems alignment is essential in achieving the desired system outcomes, as represented here:



Ongoing Communication to Support Understanding and Buy-In

The Timeline and Deliverables for achieving the charge set before the TLC was established and adopted by the Council during a January 2012 meeting. As part of this undertaking, the TLC established a set of working task forces to bring specificity to each required component of the

educator effectiveness system. One of these task forces is The Communications Task Force which has been receiving technical assistance from the National Governors' Association (NGA) through a grant received by Nevada to support the efforts of the Teachers and Leaders Council. Through support from this task force, the TLC has disseminated information to stakeholders to keep them apprised of the efforts of the TLC, including the development of talking points, presentation materials, and/or other resources to support effective communication from and with the TLC. The Communications Task Force has recommended, and the TLC has adopted and begun to implement, strategies to broaden outreach and input efforts. Presentations have been made by TLC members, using an adopted PowerPoint Template, to the following audiences: teachers, principals, district administrators, parents, charter school leaders, policy makers, and community members. Materials and information including a video are available at a website to support information dissemination (http://tlc.nv.gov/).

In the fall of 2012, the NDE will coordinate and host a series of regional one-day summits in which professional development will be provided on the evaluation system, including the beliefs, goals, and opportunities of the system, the contents of the frameworks, the empirical bases upon which they are built, the pilot and validation work, and the processes for system implementation. During these summits will also be structured focus group sessions to gather input from stakeholders regarding emerging dynamics of the system and to foster buy-in. These summits will be regional and will be offered in northern, southern, and rural eastern Nevada.

Philosophical Foundations for the Models

The overarching philosophy inherent within Nevada's approach is to keep the system as simple as possible by concentrating on those instructional principles that have the most leverage to improve student results. By doing so, there is a much greater likelihood to ensure that implementation fidelity is maintained and that teacher proficiency in these competencies is obtained. Therefore the systems for teacher and principal evaluation rest squarely upon an incredibly strong empirical base that demonstrates linkages between instruction and leadership to learning outcomes. Details about how these assumptions will be we will monitored and validated are described in detail later in the application.

Nevada Teacher Evaluation Framework

Standards-Based Indicators

Therefore, in keeping with this conceptual orientation, the TLC has articulated the Nevada Teacher Evaluation Framework, which seeks to assess performance within 2 overarching spheres: (1) Educational Practice and (2) Student Performance. Under the Educational Practice sphere are two critically important domains: (a) Instructional Practice and (b) Professional Responsibilities. The Instructional Practice domain sets the parameters for measuring the teacher's behavior in planning and delivering instruction that enables every student's learning, while the Professional Responsibilities domain addresses the parameters for everything a teacher does outside of instruction to influence and prepare for learning at the highest level in the classroom and promote effectiveness of the school community.

These domains have been determined in response to a rigorous review of existing standards, including INTASC and NBPTS standards as well as examples of other state standards such as Iowa and Delaware. These were cross-referenced, the research was reviewed, and from this work, Nevada

identified the five high leverage instructional standards identified below. The TLC then cross-walked those with the professional responsibilities, eliminated any duplication, and focused on those responsibilities that research compels us to believe will lead to improved teacher practice.

The Instructional Practice domain addresses the following five high leverage instructional principles as substantiated through a significant body of research (Heritage & Chang, 2012):

1. New learning is connected to prior learning and experience
2. Learning tasks have high cognitive demand for diverse learners
3. Students engage in meaning-making through discourse and other strategies
4. Students engage in metacognitive activity
5. Assessment is integrated into instruction

The decision to focus on high leverage instructional practices comes from guidance by national experts, with reinforcement through research, which reveals that by narrowing the scope to the assessment of instructional practice and professional development, we will broaden the depth and breadth of the system. Approaching this work with focus is much more likely to yield desired outcomes than is trying to tackle all available standards and practices and failing to move the dial on those that really matter most. These principles have an immediate and important connection to fostering student success in post-secondary environments by building students' 21st learning skills so that they graduate college- and career-ready.

The Professional Responsibilities domain addresses four key concepts:

1. Reflection on professional growth and practice
2. Contributions to the school community
3. Family engagement strategies
4. Professional obligations

For each of the five high leverage instructional principles as well as the four categories of professional responsibilities, a set of indicators is being developed to structure the assessment of teacher performance within these two domains. These indicators will be completed by December 2012. Performance as assessed under these two domains within the Educational Practice sphere will constitute 50% of a teacher's evaluation. The rubrics to assess these indicators will be designed to look at teacher and student behavior, with a focus on outcomes, not process results. For example, observers who are completing the rubrics will be asking students if they are aware of the learning goals as opposed to seeing if they are listed on a white board in the rom prior to each lesson. Also noteworthy is that the rollout and implementation of Common Core State Standards will impact teacher evaluation. This variable causes an even greater need to focus on the establishment of an aligned curriculum and the high leverage instructional principles, both for fairness in evaluation practices and to support teachers in attaining and/or maintaining the necessary skills to teach the common core with success for every student.

Student Achievement Data

The other 50% of a teacher's evaluation will come from the third sphere — Student Performance — under which there is one domain: Student Outcomes. The Student Outcomes domain exists within the system to support the use of data that reflects that the teacher's students show appropriate, expected growth over time in their subject/content area as well as showing proficiency in their

subjects and grade level. Under Nevada's draft guidelines, the following index will be used to measure performance within the Student Outcomes sphere:

Student Growth	Student Proficiency	Contributions to Reduction in Subpopulation Gaps	Student Engagement
20%	15%	10%	5%

The use of this index format is intentionally designed to align with the state's approach to measuring school success through the Nevada School Performance Framework, as described in detail in Principle 2. For the achievement measures of student growth, proficiency, and gap reduction, the data source will be derived from test results from the statewide assessments administered at grades 3-8 and grade 11 in reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics. The student engagement indicator will be derived through source data such as validated student surveys (e.g., Tripod Survey).

Regarding non-tested grades and subjects, the Nevada State Board of Education will regulate the measures of student growth that LEAs may use to determine student growth wherein statewide assessment data do not exist. Monitoring to ensure the use of required valid measures will exist as required in NRS 391.460 (2)(b). The Teachers and Leaders Council is currently exploring possible options for addressing these requirements, and is compelled by the work of other states wherein attention is paid to subject-based benchmarks and performance based assessments. As such, these measures may play a key role in Nevada's efforts. If this is the case, correspondingly, work will need to be conducted to establish exemplars. One promising consideration is that research shows that teachers learn best how to increase their own effectiveness when they are actively engaged in developing the criteria for performance assessments, so there is a double benefit to the incorporation of such an approach to measuring growth in student performance in that it creates collegial reflection and professional development loops for teachers.

Currently, due to limitations that every state is facing with regard to non-tested grades and subjects, there is a plan to learn from the early advances of three Nevada districts receiving support through SIG and TIF, that are using aggregate (i.e., schoolwide) data to generate shared attribution scores at the school level. Continuing to learn from other states through Nevada's engagement in the Southwest Comprehensive Center Educator Effectiveness Cohort and membership in CCSSO's Statewide Collaborative on Educator Effectiveness is also particularly useful to Nevada in this area of development. Efforts are already underway as well to collaborate with the Regional Education Laboratory at WestEd (REL West) to receive support for designing and implementing the pilot efforts described throughout this section of the application, which has benefits both in terms of accessing high quality technical assistance as well yielding this support by leveraging capacity and resources.

In order to go deeper than schoolwide attribution with regard to attributing growth data to individual teachers, the state must continue to build out the longitudinal data system to support the capacity to link outcomes to classes, to link students to multiple teachers who contribute to a student's instruction, and to create business rules for addressing student mobility. Testing tentative solutions to these issues will be the focus of validation studies and piloting efforts to be conducted in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

Nevada Administrator Evaluation Framework

Standards-Based Indicators

The Nevada Administrator Framework corresponds to the Teacher Framework in structure as well as in orientation to stakeholder values. Just as with teachers, administrators will be evaluated within the two spheres of Educational Practice and Student Performance. Within the Educational Practice Sphere are two domains: (1) Leadership Practice and (2) Professional Responsibilities. Similar to teachers, administrators will be assessed using student achievement data. The third sphere within the Administrator Framework is School Performance, under which exists one domain: School Outcomes.

These domains are strongly influenced by existing administrator leadership standards, including ISSLC and NBPLS. Based upon these standards and in an explicit effort to align the administrator evaluation with the standards and measure identified in the teacher framework, Nevada identified the five high leverage leadership standards identified below. As with the Teacher Framework, this approach operationalizes a desire to narrow the focus to ensure that due concentration is paid to effectiveness and fidelity of implementation.

The Leadership Practice domain, which addresses administrator behavior that enables every teacher to support student learning, assesses performance on the following high leverage leadership principles:

- Leadership for results
- Vision, culture, and expectations
- Leading the instructional framework that aligns with curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Building teacher capacity and effectiveness
- Collaboration and collective inquiry

The Professional Responsibilities domain is affiliated with everything an administrator does outside of instructional leadership to influence and prepare for learning at the highest level in each classroom and to promote effectiveness of the school community. As with teachers, there are four areas of focus with the Professional Responsibilities domain for administrators:

- Family engagement
- Community advocacy
- Reflection on professional growth and practice
- Professional obligations (e.g., legal responsibilities, ethical practice, district/state/federal requirements)

Student Achievement Data

The distribution of the models is the same for administrators as for teachers. Accordingly, the Administrator Framework is weighted such that data from the Educational Practice sphere count for 50% of the evaluation while School Performance counts for the remaining 50%. For administrators, because all data will be at the schoolwide level, attention will be paid to the school's results from the Nevada School Performance Framework described in Principal 2 so as to ensure alignment across accountability measures. As with the teacher model, the School Outcomes domain exists within the

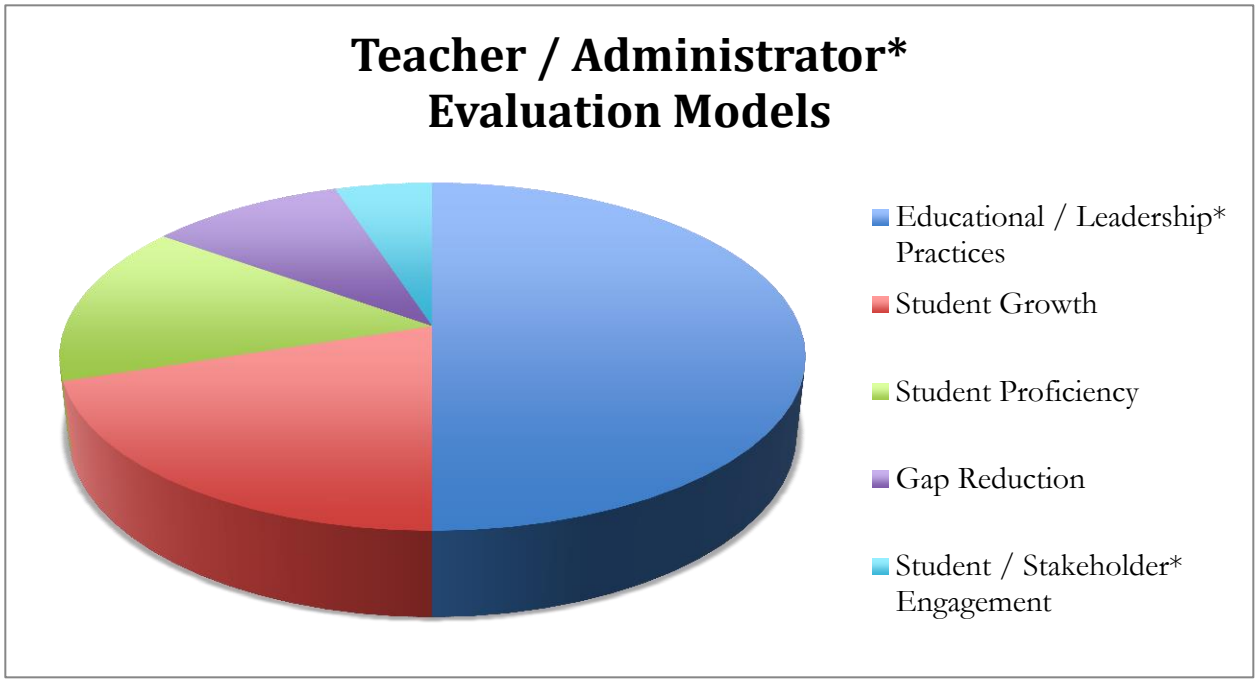
system to support the use of data reflecting that students show appropriate, expected growth over time in their subject/content area as well as showing proficiency in their subjects and grade level as described here:

Student Growth	Student Proficiency	Contributions to Reduction in Subpopulation Gaps	Stakeholder Engagement
20%	15%	10%	5%

For the achievement measures of student growth, proficiency, and gap reduction, the data source will be derived from test results from the statewide assessments administered at grades 3-8 and grade 11 in reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Accordingly, the following chart demonstrates the draft configuration for how the various indicators within each model are configured to yield the teacher and administrator evaluations.

Copies of the Nevada Teacher Evaluation Framework and the Nevada Administrator Evaluation Framework as described above can be found in Attachment 1.



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Validation Studies and Pilot Efforts

As described throughout this entire application, paying attention to growth is a fundamental value for Nevada stakeholders. Accordingly, as evidenced in the Evaluation Frameworks, 50% of a teachers' and administrators' evaluations will be informed through the use of student achievement data, which will include a combination of measures. Nevada is clearly committed to using the Nevada Growth Model for identifying and classifying school performance. State stakeholders have made an explicit decision to align educator effectiveness systems with the school accountability

system described in in principle 2. The Nevada State Board of Education has adopted the Nevada Growth Model, based upon the Colorado Growth Model, and such is currently the required methodology for evaluating educator performance with regard to growth. Nevada will be piloting the use of this approach for teacher and administrator evaluation in the 2012-2013 school year, along with a Value Added Model, in order to support comparative analysis. From these piloting effort, it is possible that the state will move towards the use of a VAM approach for educator effectiveness purposes. In June 2012, the NDE issued a Request for Information (RFI) to solicit information from vendors who may be interested in conducting work as part of the state's pilot efforts to be conducted in the coming 2012-2013 school year. From this RFI, the state will move forward in following required procurement laws to engage one or more vendors to assist the state in analyzing growth data and using it to inform teachers regarding their students' performance and needs for support to reach growth and mastery targets. These efforts will allow the state to use validation studies as a way to correlate findings across the two growth models.

A private donor has agreed to contribute resources to support the use of the VAM approach as part of the pilot efforts. Accordingly, the state is likely to enter into a "zero cost contract" whereby the NDE controls the scope of work within the contract and establishes the expected deliverables therein, while the fiscal arrangements are handled outside of state processes through the generosity of the private donor. Based on the information yielded through these pilot efforts, the state will implement one of two growth models — the NV growth model or a value added model — for the purposes of evaluating educator performance, of which 20% of an educators' evaluation will be formed, as described above. Whatever growth model is used, state guidelines as mandated in current state statute require that the data will be generated through the state's assessment program, which measures student achievement in grades 3-8 and 11 in ELA and Math.

Implementation approaches about the validation and pilot processes are described in a detailed timeline outlining the work of the state for the next two years (2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years), which is identified as Appendix 2 (*Draft: Timelines for NV Teacher Evaluation Framework*)

Support from State Legislative Leaders in Education

The timelines described in Appendix 2 are guided in part in response to a May 2012 presentation and accompanying testimony to the Nevada Legislative Committee on Education. At that time, the Council's efforts to date were shared and the Council was commended for its work. During this presentation, issues associated with timing were discussed. There was appreciation for the perspective that the TLC has taken with regard to phased-in and purposeful implementation across Nevada school districts. As stated above, it is known that this coming school year, limited piloting will take place regarding growth measures as described above. Such will occur in cooperation with three districts that are implementing required components of the School Improvement Grants (SIG), one district that is implementing Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) efforts, and other medium and small districts so that a combination of diverse schools will test the two variations of growth model approaches. The evaluation system as a whole will be *fully* tested in the 2013-2014 school year, during which time all associated components of the newly created frameworks will be addressed through systemically implemented pilot efforts. From the pilot, changes will be made to ensure the system is as thoughtfully crafted and implemented as possible, for full implementation in all 17 school districts, with the start of the 2014-2015 school year.

In addition to explicating the indicators, measures, and models as described in Attachment 2, by

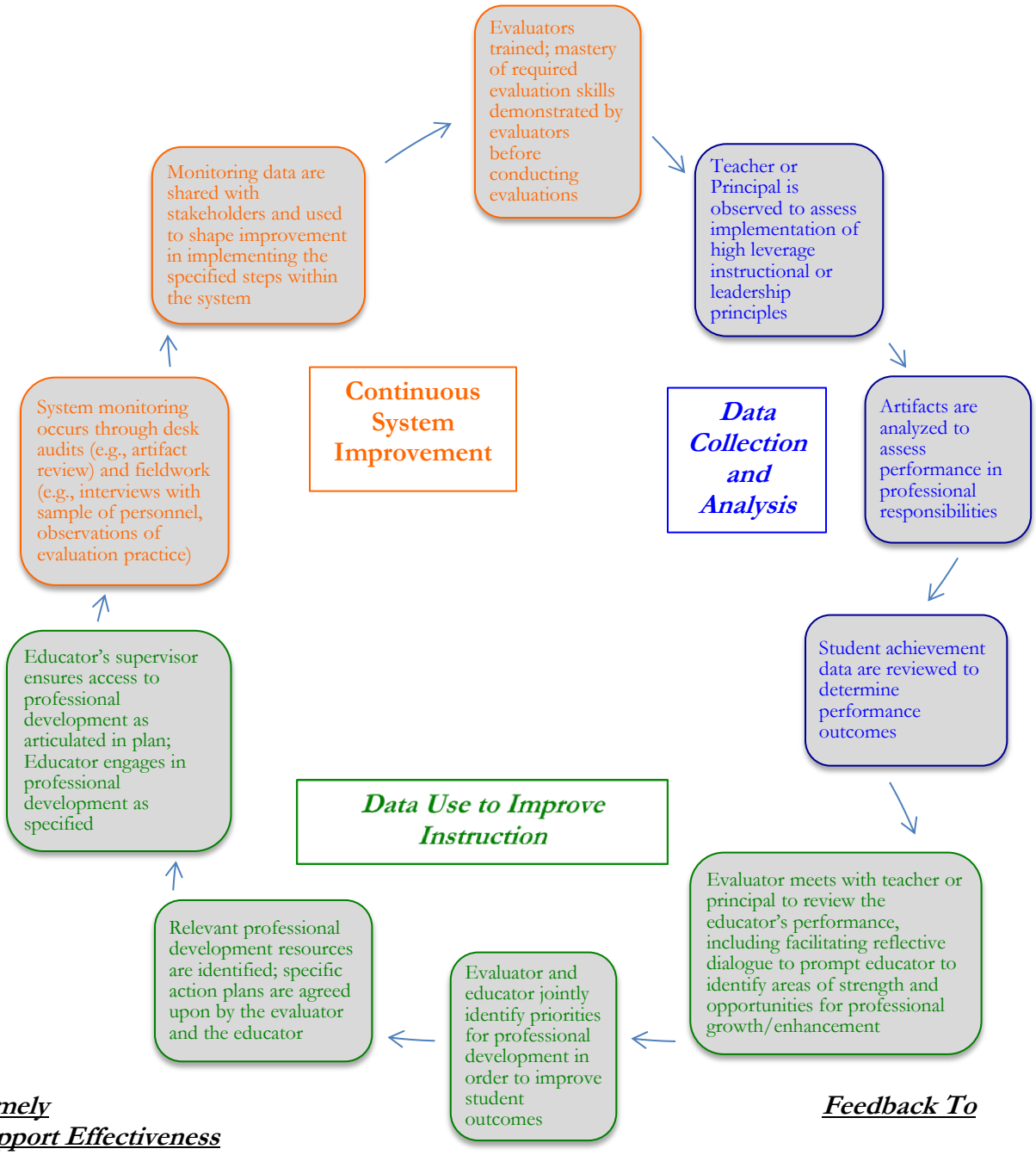
December 2012, the TLC will adopt additional considerations associated with implementation of the statewide performance system to address the following:

- Considerations for creating and maintaining evaluators who can collect data with reliability (i.e., evaluator training, demonstration of mastery, and perhaps evaluator certification);
- Mechanisms for ensuring teachers and administrators have meaningful opportunities to share sound educational practices
- Systemic approaches to supporting the delivery of professional development, coaching, and other efforts to align the provision of support to teacher and administrators with the data that are yielded through the uniform performance evaluation system
- Additional considerations for Statewide uniformity and local flexibility where appropriate
- Costs analyses for implementing the system
- Additional considerations for system evaluation and monitoring for continuous improvement

The performance evaluation system recommended by the Council must ensure that data derived from the evaluations are used to create professional development that enhances the effectiveness of teachers and administrators. Accordingly, and as specified in the statute, timeliness is an important consideration for fostering a system in which data are provided in ways that serve to improve, and in some cases, transform practice. As a result, school districts will be required to deliver evaluation data to teachers and principals with sufficient frequency and within appropriate periods following conduct of the evaluations, so as to empower the appropriate use data. In part, the use of such data must drive differentiated professional development that meets the needs of the learner—in this case, teachers and administrators.

The Teachers and Leaders Council established through the state guidelines has specified that the second of four total goals of the statewide performance evaluation system is to *Improve educators' effective instructional practices*. This goal aligns with assertions at NRS §391.3125 which specifies that the primary purpose of an evaluation is to provide a format for constructive assistance. NRS 391.460(1)(a) clearly articulates that the statewide performance evaluation system must be developed and implemented such that teachers and administrators must be (2) afforded a meaningful opportunity to improve their effectiveness through professional development that is linked to their evaluations; and (3) provided with the means to share effective educational methods with other teachers and administrators throughout the state. The graphic on the following page illustrates the state's vision for how the various components of the overarching system will be sequenced in order to achieve desired results.

Nevada Educator Performance Evaluation System
to Improve Student Learning & Growth
— Implementation Flow Chart —



NRS §391.460 (1)(a)(2) and (3) specify that teachers and administrators must be afforded a meaningful opportunity to improve their effectiveness through professional development that is linked to their evaluations; and provided with the means to share effective educational methods with

other teachers and administrators throughout the state. The Nevada Administrative Code will further regulate the provision of differentiated professional development guided by the evaluation data as required under NRS §391.460. Additionally, NRS §391.3125(7) requires that employees receive a copy of each evaluation not later than 15 days after the evaluation. The TLC has set forth the following parameters with regard to ensuring that teachers and administrators receive timely observations that contribute to their evaluations. The TLC has affirmed a belief that observations need to be conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes, in response to research that is beginning to emerge which indicates that observations in 15 minute lengths provide as much information as longer observations. The following timeline provides some level of guidance but does not restrict flexibility in the observation process, which also takes into consideration year round schools.

	3x a year (Probationary, Min. Effective, Ineffective)	**2x a year (Post-Probationary, Effective)**	**1x a year (Highly Effective)**
Pre-Evaluation Conference (Self-Assessment and identified area(s) of instructional focus)	Prior to the first observation	Prior to the first observation	Prior to the first observation and recommended within 10 weeks of the start of instruction
1st observation	Within first 8 weeks of instruction	Within first 10 weeks of instruction	Within first 24 weeks of instruction
2nd observation	No sooner than 2 weeks from previous observation; no later than 16 weeks of instruction	No sooner than 2 weeks from previous observation; no later than 24 weeks of instruction	
3rd observation	No sooner than 2 weeks from previous observation, within 24 weeks of instruction		

Teacher Observation Process

System parameters for teacher evaluation are further articulated in draft guidelines than are those for administrator evaluation. However, it is planned that there will be a high degree of correlation in terms of how administrator observations are conducted, such that the administrator system will mirror the approach for teachers described here (except with a focus on leadership principles instead of instructional principles). Appendix 3 (*Overview of the Nevada Teacher Evaluation Cycle*) graphically depicts the process described below relative to the observation process for teachers and some components of the additional evaluation processes.

The annual teacher evaluation cycle will begin with a teacher self-assessment against the five high level instructional principles and pre-evaluation conference between the teacher and administrator that includes identification of an instructional focus. The rationale behind this concept is that allowing flexibility in the process of the self-assessment capitalizes on practices and structures within districts, while requiring the focus on the five high level instructional principles will strategically align

professional development toward fidelity of implementation.

Building capacity is also a critical value in Nevada's theory of action. Accordingly, evaluators may include administrators as well as other identified personnel. Training for evaluators will be required. The state will build out training materials for the state model and provide support for the provision of training. While the observer pool will be bigger than administrators, there will be some occasions in which an administrator must conduct observations, to include the following:

- at least 2 of the 3 observations for an ineffective/minimally effective teacher
- 1 of the 2 evaluations for an effective teacher
- If only one observation per year is required, then at least one observation must be conducted by an administrator every other evaluation.

Announced observations will consist of a pre-action review with the evaluator and the teacher, and observation based upon the high leverage instructional principles, and end with a post-action review. The pre- and post- action review will include a list of standardized questions and potential artifacts/evidence review, as requested by the evaluator. This is built into the system because of a resounding belief that building in a pre and post action review within the observation process will improve the quality of the observation and its results and emphasize teacher self-reflection.

Post-Evaluation Conferences will also be required in order to review teacher performance across all components of the Teacher Evaluation Framework, and must occur prior to the end of the current instructional year. This approach is grounded upon the idea that this year-end review will provide administrators and evaluators an opportunity to review the Teacher Evaluation Framework results prior to the end of the instructional year.

Year-to-year Student Outcomes data must be reviewed as part of the evaluation cycle and used to guide professional development decisions, but the use of Student Outcomes domain for high-stakes decision making for post-probationary teachers must include 3 prior years of student achievement data. This is founded upon the need to utilize the current year's data in the analysis for identifying professional development decisions, while realizing that high stakes decisions need to be made using 3 prior years of student achievement data due to the need to be technically defensible, and to address issues associated with timing of data return from test vendors from spring CRT administrations which occur in May, annually, per statutory requirements.

The student achievement data for any given year will be reviewed during the Pre-Evaluation Conference of the following year, and included in the calculation of the Student Outcomes domain score beginning the following year. As referenced above, student assessment data will not be available for analysis until mid-July, making its inclusion in the end of the year post evaluation impossible. However, review should be included at the pre-evaluation conference.

Statewide Uniformity and Local Flexibility

The State will develop and provide a State observation rubric to assess teacher performance on the High-Leverage Instructional Principles identified by the Teacher Evaluation Framework. Districts must either implement the State rubric or submit for approval applications for local flexibility by submitting the rubric they propose to use as well as evidence that the selected rubric will validly and reliably measure teacher performance against the five high leverage principles. This approach

recognizes the need to allow for local flexibility while ensuring some level of assurance that the 5 high leverage instructional principles will be measured with fidelity. This concept aligns with the stated "loose-tight" paradigm upon which Nevada's new accountability system is founded, including strong alignment to Principal 2. The approval process for any District-submitted requests for flexibility regarding the teacher and Administrator Evaluation Frameworks will be developed by the NDE with stakeholder input, including District representatives, parents, teachers, and others as deemed appropriate. This allows for an expectation that the framework will meet most situations; however it does allow flexibility in extenuating circumstances, in order to support in part, human capital decision making when extenuating circumstances have arisen.

NRS 391.460 (1)(a)(1) states that teachers and administrators must be evaluated using multiple, fair, timely, rigorous and valid methods, and at NRS 391.460 (2)(b) speaks to monitoring of the performance evaluation system at least annually for quality, reliability, validity, fairness, consistency and objectivity. Details regarding district level policies will be regulated in Nevada Administrative Code (NAC), which will likely require that each school district submit a plan for how it will collect, analyze, and use data to inform the evaluation process for teachers and administrators. It is projected that the state will form a Technical Advisory Committee that will be populated with nationally recognized experts who will review proposed local plans and provide guidance on suggestions for enhancing, refining, and/or modifying local plans to ensure that necessary technical considerations are met with regard to those strict criteria established in state statute. District plans will most certainly be required to provide the empirical basis on which certain elements are formed. Each district will be required to either use a state-developed rubric to assess teachers' and administrators' use of instructional and leadership principles, respectively, or to demonstrate how their model meets required criteria. LEAs will likely have latitude for proposing various locally appropriate approaches for measuring professional responsibilities.

Professional Development to Support Educator Success

Supports to Validate and Implement the System

Pilot efforts in the 2013-2014 school year will be critical in helping to create the match between professional development resources and the educators who need them. In this coming school year, principals and district administrators will receive training to understand the parameters of the evaluation system and gain a fuller and deeper understanding of how to both collect evaluation data within the new system, as well as how to support the creation and implementation of professional growth and enhancement plans for those educators they supervise. Such training will address the need for, as well as mechanisms to ensure the alignment of, professional development that is driven by evaluation results. The NDE will create modules for use at the state and local levels to provide such training, which will include engagement exercises that require supervisors to "practice" requisite skills in creating a match between needs and solutions. Some of this training necessarily must and therefore will include support to assist evaluators in deepening their capacity to appropriate conduct root cause analyses, without which there could be a mismatch between an educator's needs and the professional development provided (i.e., it would not be appropriately differentiated based on need).

Of note, in the 2012-2013 school year, the comprehensive portal in the NDE's Bighorn site will be built out to support differentiated and individualized support for educators. Efforts will also begin to create an index system as a resource to support supervisors and educators in working together to

fairly easily identify possible professional development solutions that match their professional development needs. The NDE will host this resource tool which will be searchable by key variables to facilitate ease in locating support for various elements of pedagogy as well as core content training needs, across subjects and grade levels.

Data to Drive Professional Learning Activities

Nevada is committed to building the educator effectiveness system to support improvements in teaching and leading. Therefore, there will be a concerted effort to align professional learning activities toward identified needs and to provide learning opportunities that are job-embedded and sustained. A number of infrastructures do exist within the state, and will also be supplemented and enhanced, to help support these desired outcomes. Newly created data resulting from the statewide performance evaluation system will be the linchpin around which professional development solutions are built for teachers and for school administrators. Formative evaluation data will guide the delivery of professional development and focused support to increase results for all educators — from those who are novice to those who are seasoned professionals, from those who are highly effective through those who are deemed ineffective through these new measures. Such data will result from implementation of the *Nevada Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Frameworks*. For teachers, it will include feedback relative to their performance (1) in the classroom with regard to skill in using the five high leverage instructional principals identified through a meta-analysis of the research on effective teaching in order to enable every student's learning, (2) meeting professional responsibilities associated with individual teaching assignments and as part of the school with regard to everything a teacher does outside of instruction to influence and prepare for learning at the highest level in the classroom and to promote effectiveness of the school community, and (3) in meeting and raising the achievement levels (i.e., proficiency and growth) of every student they teach. For administrators, it will include feedback relative to their performance (1) in the school with regard to skill in using the five high leverage leadership principles that demonstrate administrator behavior that enables every teacher to support student learning, (2) meeting professional responsibilities with regard to everything an administrator does outside of instructional leadership to influence and prepare for learning at the highest level in each classroom and promote effectiveness of the school community, and (3) student outcomes to support students showing appropriate, expected growth over time in their subject/content area and proficiency in subjects and grade levels, in alignment with school accountability measures under the NSPF.

When appropriate, professional development will be customized for individual teachers and administrators including targeted coaching and mentoring; when deemed effective to do so, professional development will be provided for small or large groups of educators so as to be resource efficient while still yielding desired results. Historically as a nation, too much professional development has been offered in response to assumptions about educators' needs. In the last decade, shifts have transpired so that more professional development has become increasingly responsive to district and school level data. The opportunities created through the development and implementation of a robust, next-generation system of performance evaluation for educators allow for far better support to teachers and administrators based upon their unique needs as revealed through performance evaluation data. Parallel to this consideration is the need to ensure that follow-through exists so that when the specific needs of a teacher or principal are identified, the requisite supports are delivered in accordance with data-driven planning for educator improvement or enhancement. More about this consideration is described relative to system monitoring, further below in this application.

With regard to ensuring that each teacher and administrator in Nevada is supported to excel, as driven by and substantiated through ongoing evaluation data, infrastructures at the state, regional, and local levels are essential. Statewide systems of support include Nevada's three Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs), which are one of the primary statewide mechanisms for ensuring educators' success in teaching students to reach mastery of content standards. Created through legislative action in the late 90s, the RPDPs are seen as the premier statewide resource for the provision of professional development on content as well as pedagogy. Each RPDP is administratively housed in one of three school districts, with LEAs from across the state assigned to each RPDP based on geographic considerations. Such a system ensures that each Nevada school district has access to high quality professional development that is tailored to the unique needs of each given district, and yet that when appropriate, regional and/or statewide functions are offered as well, so as to support effective professional collaboration among peers in ways that use resources efficiently. A designated Director leads each of the three RPDPs, which are further staffed by personnel who have deep expertise in content knowledge (and especially core content), as well as demonstrated strengths in pedagogical practice. The work of the RPDPs is described in more detail in Principle 1, relative to their importance in moving the state forward to full implement of the Common Core State Standards. Of course the work of all three principles is and must be inextricably linked in order to truly graduate students who will reach college and career success. Accordingly, much of the work of the RPDPs will focus on ensuring that teachers possess a full and rich understanding of the Common Core including core content as well as expectations for metacognition, and have the pedagogical skills to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of every student in their classrooms. Accompanying such a focus at the teacher level will be efforts to ensure that principals possess requisite knowledge of the Standards and also have the complementary skills and capacity to guide instructional staff at their schools to teach students to mastery. Of particular importance in this regard is support to assist teachers and administrators in helping to reach students with disabilities and students who are English Language Learners. Resources have been set aside from Title III and from IDEA to support professional development for relevant personnel on how to analyze achievement data for these student populations, and on sheltered instructional practices to encourage appropriate teaching approaches. Also addressed through the use of IDEA dollars is the sustainability of the Instructional Consultation Teams Model as described in detail in Principle 2, along with deepening districts' implementation of co-teaching models, also described in Principle 2. Related to these efforts will be an explicit effort to focus on ensuring that the curriculum is accessible through the principles of universal design for learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction, and that assessments are accessible and well-designed to accurately measure student knowledge. Without such an emphasis it is possible that teachers of students with disabilities may disproportionately fall into the minimally effective or ineffective categories.

In addition to the deep work of the RPDPs, another critical instrument within the statewide toolbox will be a comprehensive internet-based portal that aggregates information on research and effective practices on standards, assessment, curriculum, and instruction. In January 2012, the State Board of Education adopted *Nevada's Strategic Plan for PreK-12 Educational Excellence,* which identifies four strategic priorities, all of which are designed to support college and career readiness for every Nevada student. As part of this plan, the State committed to developing a portal that can be used by every educator in the state to share effective practices, access new ideas, information, and resources, and connect educators through peer dialogue and action research. This resource will be particularly important in helping to meet the very necessary charge under statute that teachers and

administrators be afforded opportunities to share effective practices and learn from one another. The NDE is currently establishing an advisory team to design the content and architecture to expand existing portal functionality within the state's Bighorn portal, after which IT staff will write code to enable Bighorn to accommodate the new portal. A system will be created to solicit, vet, and migrate resources from practitioners and entities in order to ensure that the portal serves its desired purposes. As part of these efforts, research will be conducted and a plan will be created to build and sustain an effective portal in Nevada, and which includes evaluation (feedback) measures from site users. Existing partnerships that will help support the success of this work include: REL West, the Southwest Comprehensive Center (soon to become the West CC), the RPDPs, the What Works Clearinghouse, other State Education Agencies, Nevada School Districts, higher education institutions, and the Regional Resource Program Center (RRPC)/Technical Assistance and Dissemination Network (TA&D Network), and others that are identified and established through the state's initial research effort described herein.

The state portal will be informed by the work of Clark County School District's *Curriculum Engine*, a similarly configured web-based tool that provides such resources to CCSD's educational personnel across their approximately 350 schools. The *Curriculum Engine* is a web-based, curriculum delivery system that promotes one-stop shopping for teachers to provide efficiency and effectiveness in planning classroom instruction and provides access to collected knowledge in the District regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment as a means for collaboration among teachers in planning classroom instruction. For proprietary reasons, the *Curriculum Engine* in its entirety is available only to employees of the CCSD, however many of the resources therein will be linked and available through the state portal. Additionally, the NDE has entered into a contract with Clark County School District to support administrative costs associated with the Curriculum Engine in return for all teachers across the state to have access to the WikiTeacher component of the site, which contains a wealth of teacher-built tools and exemplars. Similar resource efforts from across the country will also help populate the state portal. For example, an arrangement has already been created with the Virginia SEA for Nevada to make content available with regard to career and technical education that can help teachers increase student outcomes in targeted courses that prepare young adults for college and career success after high school, in a variety of enriching fields.

Across all 17 school districts, local efforts will be particularly important for the delivery of aligned supports to teachers and administrators. As guided by the work of the Teachers and Leaders Council, school district superintendents are coming to realize they will need to spend existing resources differently if the results are going to change. Current evaluative processes will be replaced with processes that are more empirically substantiated to achieve targeted results as led by the contents and approaches to be prescribed under the statewide performance evaluation system including the *Teacher and Administrator Frameworks*. Data from the Nevada School Performance Framework as well as educator evaluation efforts will converge to focus district efforts upon ensuring that teachers and administrators have the skills and are reinforced to deliver highly effective instruction for all students.

In order for these resources to be effectively used to support teachers and administrators in improving their practice, their use must be informed by evaluation data. These formative data will be recognized as critically important for guiding the development of professional growth plans and therefore, feedback loops will be built into system monitoring to ensure that district administrators support principals in accessing professional development, including coaching and mentoring when

appropriate, and that principals do the same for teachers. Evaluators will be held accountable for their efforts to connect educators with resources in response to data collected through the evaluation process. Over time, part of the work to enhance the system will be to continually increase school, district, and state capacity to link like teachers and like administrators so as to ensure the delivery of effective professional development in ways that are most efficient, from a perspective of economy of scale. Such work will also help to identify teachers and administrators who are performing exceptionally well, so as to create opportunities for these individuals to increase their own leadership skills and to support lesser-performing educators by engaging in leadership roles with regard to peer reflection, information sharing, and mentoring.

Four-Tier Ratings of Effectiveness

Additionally, the TLC is required to develop a timeline for monitoring the performance evaluation system at least annually for quality, reliability, validity, fairness, consistency and objectivity. As a result of applying the principles of this evaluation system, Nevada teachers and principals will be classified within a differentiated 4-tier personnel performance framework. NRS 391.465 (2)(a) states that the performance evaluation system must result in the assignment of one of four performance categories such that an employee's overall performance is determined to be: (1) highly effective; (2) effective; (3) minimally effective; or (4) ineffective.

Monitoring to Support Continuous Improvement

System monitoring will include the collection and use of data from teachers and principals to ensure that their feedback is sought for continuous improvement purposes. Mechanisms for such data collection will include a combination of the following approaches: surveys, focus groups, and testimony to the State Board of Education and the Nevada Teachers and Leaders Council, which will also continue to be populated by individuals in these roles.

The state will facilitate statewide technical assistance meetings for school district personnel, in which technical expertise is made available to assist districts in analyzing current practice, determining what components of existing systems may be sufficiently configured to meet the new statewide criteria, and provoking new thinking about changes that will be necessary at various local levels in order to implement a system with the necessary technical rigor regarding issues of validity, reliability, fairness, and timeliness. The same experts who provide assistance to help formulate local approaches will also advise the state in the development of monitoring tools and approaches to ensure that the technical rigor that has been contemplated is in fact implemented over time. This will include the development of processes as well as protocols in order to conduct monitoring efforts with sufficient exactitude. Such processes will require that each district is monitored annually, and that implementation assessment data provide both formative feedback and summative evaluation to foster continuous improvement, as demonstrated in the previous illustration.

As described above, monitoring efforts will include desk audits and on-site performance reviews to assess the quality of local level programs and adherence to required components, as well as to note results associated with system implementation. As part of these efforts, the NDE will collect data that include information about the number of educators assigned to each of the four performance evaluation ratings, retention ratings correlated with performance evaluation ratings, and student performance outcomes correlated to performance evaluation ratings. Additionally, the NDE will collect perception survey data and information about the extent to which educators understand how

they are being evaluated, what they need to do to improve, and how to access resources they need to support their professional growth and development. Such information will be used in tandem with data from the Nevada School Performance Framework to determine the degree to which school districts need support to analyze existing practices and develop improvement plans through the SAGE process (see principle 2) to raise achievement across the district. Related to this approach will be efforts to try to evaluate whether professional development is resulting in gains in teacher and leader effectiveness, so that we can both use evaluation data to guide PD efforts, and also to determine if teachers and administrators have improved.

NRS §391.3125 specifies that the primary purpose of an evaluation is to provide a format for constructive assistance, and that evaluations, while not the sole criterion, must be used in the dismissal process. The Teachers and Leaders Council has further specified that the third goal of the statewide performance evaluation system is to *Inform human capital decisions*. NRS is clear in delineating expectations for addressing teacher and administrator ineffectiveness. Such personnel are subject to mandated professional improvement plans wherein goals are established and progress towards goals is assessed. Requisite supports are identified in such plans, and supervisors must be accountable for ensuring the plans are implemented. While these requirements are clear, historically, there have been challenges with regard to implementation. Accordingly, part of the work of the new accountability system must be a focus on monitoring and supporting implementation. Principals have stated that removing teachers from the classroom is a challenge due to the amount of time required to document efforts to assist the teacher. Accordingly, the need for supplemental supports to principals who identify ineffective teachers must be provided by school district administrators. The same is true for the removal of ineffective principals.

Non-Tested Grades and Subjects

Part of what the TLC must address is how to approach evaluation for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects. A robust national research base does not yet exist to well inform the kinds of comprehensive, redesigned systems of educator evaluation that Nevada is developing. However, there is literature on emerging practices that show promise. The NDE has engaged several experts to assist and support the TLC. One of these individuals, Dr. Lynn Holdheide, of Vanderbilt University and the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, is a nationally recognized authority in teacher evaluation systems development, as well as a special education content expert. Through her guidance, the TLC has received professional development on issues associated with building systems that appropriately evaluate and support that population of teachers who are nationally referred to as "the other 69%". Accordingly, the TLC is having explicit conversations about making sure that special education teachers, ELL teachers, and other specialty area teachers, as well as those teachers who provide instruction in grades and subjects that are not assessed with statewide summative assessments are meaningfully included in Nevada's new educator effectiveness system.

The TLC will be making decisions about how such personnel should be addressed in Nevada, including whether or not to differentiate the process of evaluation for special educators and others. Purposeful conversations by the TLC include discussion of the challenges in implementation when considering training needs, and fidelity of implementation in singular versus differentiated systems. The TLC will continue to contemplate and then make decisions about how to accurately measure growth of students with disabilities and connect that growth to teacher effect. The TLC will also need to address how the various measures of instructional practice (e.g., observation protocols,

student and parent surveys, evaluation of artifacts) are appropriate for use with teachers of students with disabilities – or whether the field would benefit from the augmentation of the existing protocols that speaks to specific evidenced-based instructional practices for students with disabilities (e.g., direct and explicit instruction, learning strategy instruction), specific roles and responsibilities of special educators (e.g., IEP facilitation, development and implementation, coordination of related services personnel) and specific curricular needs (e.g., secondary transition services, social and behavioral needs, orientation and mobility). Another important dimension is distinct consideration for teachers (both general and special education) serving in a co-teaching capacity, including considerations of how student growth will be accurately and fairly attributed when more than one teacher is contributing to student learning, and how measures of instructional practice will be modified, with indicators of effective co-teaching factored when determining teacher effectiveness. In light of these complex issues, Nevada is cognizant of the importance of ensuring that the needs of students with disabilities and their teachers are fully represented within the design process from the very beginning, as this is central to ensuring that the evaluation process leads to quality feedback regarding teacher performance. Consideration of differentiation among content area teachers is also a concern, as many ELL and special education students receive much of their instruction in "regular" classrooms. Part of the pilot work to be conducted this coming 2012-2013 school year will address considerations of shared attribution for personnel teaching in non-tested grades and subjects. Learning gleaned from phase I of the pilot will then inform the implementation of pilot efforts in phase II during the 2013-2014 school year, which will ultimately inform the system that is implemented statewide in the 2014-2015 school year.

3.B ENSURE LEAS IMPLEMENT TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

3.B Provide the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines.

As described in Section 3.A, the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) will present an evaluation system framework to the State Board of Education, which will adopt regulations mandating the parameters for system implementation, including requirements for monitoring and oversight. The following components serve as the structure for the evaluation systems framework that will be presented to the Board, and accordingly, this framework will address detailed considerations for:

1. Evaluation Process
2. Categories of Evidence
3. Specific Indicators and Measures of Evidence
4. Data Collection Needs
5. Training Needs for System Implementation
6. Professional Development and Support
7. System Evaluation & Support, and
8. Nevada Department of Education and Local Education Agency (LEA) Duties and Associated Costs

The TLC has determined that implementation of the Nevada's new performance evaluation system must be purposefully phased in over time, with an expectation that the system will be piloted for both principals and teachers in a representative set of school districts, with phase I piloting to occur in the 2012-2013 school year, and phase II piloting in the following 2013-2014 school year. Senate Bill 407, adopted in 2013, states that no later than the 2015-2016 school year, teachers and administrators will be fully evaluated with the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) This requirement is reflected in the pilot phases and full implementation schedule described in the section *Nevada's Transition to A Statewide System of Educator Evaluation*.. The system will be operational in all 17 of Nevada's school districts in the 2015– 2016 school year, with LEAs' personnel decisions informed by the new evaluation systems. A Validation Study is being conducted by WestEd during School Years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. The Validation Study will provide information about whether decisions associated with the NEPF are valid, defensible, and reliable, and whether the NEPF should be refined.

The TLC is continuing to work to reach consensus on the nuances regarding the degree to which flexibility in the statewide system will be allowed. The TLC has determined that school districts will be required to implement the Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Frameworks, but will be allowed variability in the tools they use to collect data towards required elements within the parameters of the approval process described above in Section 3A. As noted, there will be an established process by which school districts will submit empirical evidence to support their proposed implementation efforts, and the NDE will review those plans for approval. Such evidence will need to demonstrate that the tools to be used by the district yield data that are valid and reliable, and that they will implement the system within established State parameters, including collecting and reporting data against specified indicators within those frameworks.

Teachers and administrators are specifically targeted and their input is solicited in the development of the system through membership on the TLC. Additionally, through the efforts of the Communications Task Force described above, a comprehensive strategy for supplemental educator engagement in system development will be accomplished. Through these efforts, as described above, public input opportunities will be leveraged. Additionally, in the statewide survey distributed as part of this Waiver Application development process, questions were included regarding the performance evaluation system. More than 1000 site-based administrators and teachers provided input through this survey, weighing in on the types of data that should inform teacher and administrator evaluations, and the types of supports and rewards that should be embedded within a comprehensive system of educator effectiveness that increases students' college and career readiness.

The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) will provide oversight and implement general supervision responsibilities to ensure that pilot processes and full-scale implementation efforts are operationalized in accordance with State statutes and regulations. Teachers and principals have been and will remain an integral part of the design process and will be key participants in all phases of implementation, including evaluation and delivery of requisite support systems. As demonstrated early in this application, solid partnerships exist among schools, districts, the NDE, and State and local teachers' and administrators' associations. Just as collaboration in the development of the new evaluation system is of critical importance, so too is partnership to support implementation with fidelity.

The focus of the Title IIa Coordinator at the NDE will be to provide monitoring, technical assistance, and support for the implementation of the Nevada Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Frameworks. Site visits as well as desk audit procedures will be implemented to ascertain the degree to which LEAs are meeting the requirements of the new educator evaluation system. Monitoring efforts will ensure that each component of the state's educator evaluation frameworks are met, to include the collection and use of qualitative data (e.g., classroom/building observations) as well as quantitative data with regard to both proficiency and growth metrics of student achievement. Districts will be required to submit annual reports in which details are provided to describe inputs (i.e., processes undertaken), outputs (e.g., number of educators evaluated), and outcomes (e.g., human capital decisions made). Corrective action will be required when non-compliance is determined, and technical assistance will be made available to support full implementation as required under state regulations. Implications will exist for distribution of funds for those districts that are not satisfactorily implementing the required frameworks, to include withholding federal and/or state funds if necessary. Such actions were reflected in the adoption of regulations by the State Board of Education (Nevada Administrative Code Chapter 391 as amended by Legislative Council Bureau File R007-13. http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NAC/NAC-391.html).

A stated goal of the TLC is to engage stakeholders in the continuous improvement and monitoring of a professional growth system. In January, the TLC engaged Dr. Margaret Heritage, of the University of California, Los Angeles National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST). Dr. Heritage helped the TLC to establish an understanding of the role that feedback loops can play in building systems that do in fact continuously improve, and the TLC agreed that this orientation will be a key factor in achieving successful implementation of an educator effectiveness system that achieves the targeted system goals. The TLC, and down the line, the NDE, will continue to access expertise from individuals such as those affiliated with CRESST to inform the implementation of monitoring and support frameworks that result in useful progress monitoring and summative data to help drive systems improvement over time. As described in Principle 2, Nevada has had success in monitoring the implementation of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools using a framework that is built upon meta-analyses of implementation science conducted by the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN). This same paradigm will be instructive in developing a system of monitoring for the implementation of rigorous, reliable, and valid educator evaluation efforts and which provides data that are used for continuous improvement.

Educator Effectiveness is a foundational component of Nevada's new accountability system. As anticipated by State legislation and designed by the Teacher and Leaders Council, a fair and consistently implemented evaluation system will be established throughout the State. Districts, educator preparation institutions, programs providing professional learning opportunities, evaluators, and educators will have a common understanding and baseline of expectations drawn from established research and best practice. The measures and tools used to evaluate educators will be based on fair and reliable indicators, including student achievement and other valid measures. Decisions about professional learning, rewards and consequences and planned remediation of practice and programs will be informed by diagnosis that provides feedback to users invested in continuous improvement of practice. At each phase of the effective system of educator evaluation, diagnosis of need, and specific feedback and planning will provide program

planners, evaluators, and educators with appropriate and rigorous content and pedagogy, and data to inform improved practice so that all students will be college- and career-ready on exiting high school.

Obstacles to and Leadership for Achieving Success in Principle 3

Development and Implementation of a Statewide Uniform Performance Evaluation System

Capacity to implement a fully aligned system that addresses educator effectiveness will be challenging in Nevada. In order to ensure that the system is implemented in ways that yield valid and reliable data, high quality training will be needed for evaluators, and checks and balances will need to be put into place to ensure inter-rater reliability and adherence to mandates of the prescribed system. The forerunning work of districts receiving SIG and TIF grants will assist in building this capacity. The NDE, school districts, and the RPDPs will also need to assess and then where appropriate reallocate existing resources to ensure that professional development is truly delivered in response to needs determined through the evaluation of teachers and administrators. LEAs will also need to partner with local teacher and administrator associations to expand access to support in professional development, as well as to negotiate elements of the system that must be addressed through collective bargaining agreements.

Leadership from the NDE for ongoing system development, implementation, enhancement, and monitoring will be provided through the direction of the Superintendent's Office, the Office of Assessment, Program Accountability and Curriculum, and the Office of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs.

Nevada's Transition to the Nevada Educator Performance Framework
A Statewide System of Educator Evaluation

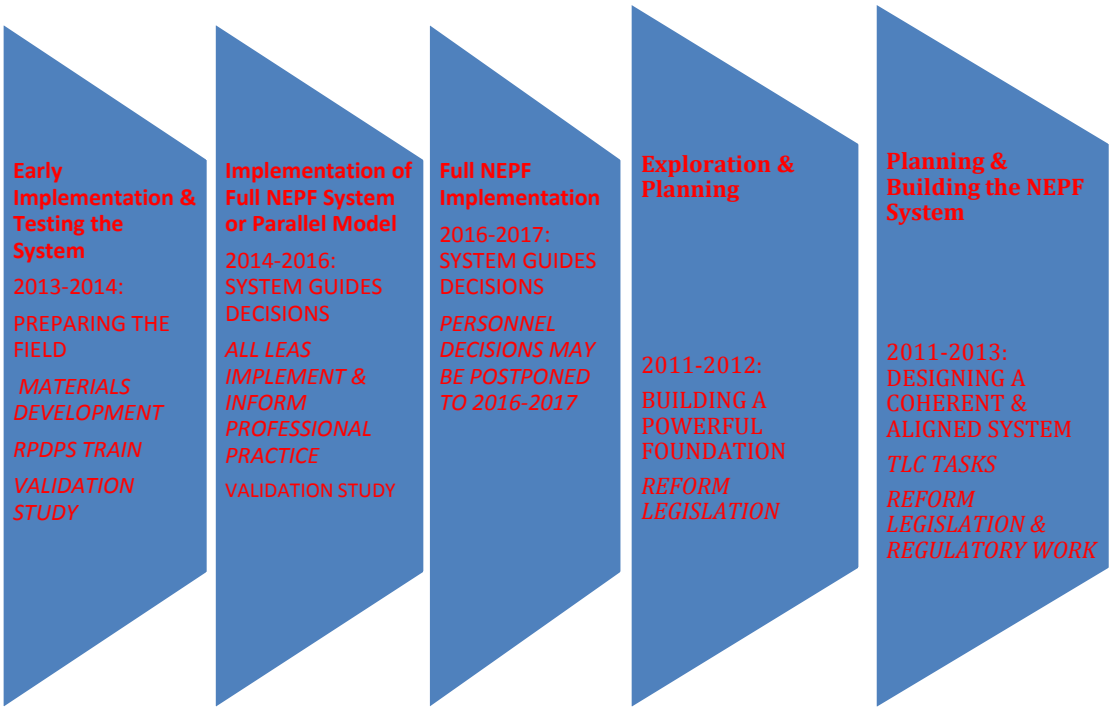


Table 3.B.1 Key Milestones in NV Transition to a Statewide Educator Evaluation System

2011-2012 Exploration and Planning: Building A Powerful Foundation of Reform Legislation
JUNE 2011
Assembly Bill (AB) 222 passed • Guidelines for rigorous evaluation of educators • Charter for Teachers & Leaders Council to create recommendation explicating guidelines **Responsible Parties:** Nevada Senate & Assembly, Governor Sandoval **Evidence: Assembly Bill (AB) 222** *NV ESEA Flexibility Attachments* (Attachment 10) http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/76th2011/Bills/AB/AB222_EN.pdf
JUNE 2011
Assembly Bill (AB) 229 Revised and passed Reforms requirements for tenure and promotion of teachers & administrators • Probationary period changed to three 1-year periods • Establishes requirements for "effective" teachers **Responsible Parties:** Nevada Senate & Assembly, Governor Sandoval **Evidence:** Assembly Bill (AB) 229 *NV ESEA Flexibility Attachments* (Attachment 10) http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/76th2011/Bills/AB/AB229_EN.pdf

2011-2013 Planning and Building the Nevada Education Performance Framework System

SEPTEMBER 2011

Teachers & Leaders Council (TLC) chartered

Nominees from specified stakeholder groups bringing broad-based educational expertise
Charged to create statewide uniform performance evaluation system ensuring all teachers & principals

- Evaluated using multiple, fair, timely, rigorous & valid methods
- Assessed on involvement & engagement of students' families
- Afforded opportunity to link professional development to evaluations
- Provided means to share effective educational methods with other educators statewide

Responsible Parties: Nevada Department of Education, NV State Education Association, NV Association of School Administrators, Higher Education, NV District representatives, Governor Sandoval's Office, Parent Teachers Association, School Boards, Title IIa
Evidence: *NV ESEA Flexibility Attachments* (Attachment 10)

OCTOBER 2011-May 2012

TLC meets monthly

- Develops beliefs, purposes, goals
- Develops recommendations for Frameworks for evaluating teachers & administrators
- Creates and routinely updates ***Systems Guideline White Paper***

Responsible Parties: Teachers' & Leaders Council; Deputy Superintendent & Title IIa, Nevada Department of Education
Evidence: Teachers and Leaders Council ACTION REPORT
http://nde.doe.nv.gov/Teachers/ActionRpts/2011-12-06-07_Action%20Report.pdf
NV ESEA Flexibility Attachments (Attachment 11)

MAY 2012

TLC adopts Draft *Nevada Teacher Evaluation Framework* and *Nevada Administrator Evaluation Framework*

- 50% of evaluation to be informed by student achievement data including proficiency & growth
- 50% of evaluation to be informed by High Leverage Instructional Principles and Professional Responsibilities (for teachers) and Leadership Practice and Professional Responsibilities (for administrators)
- Additional information needed about stability of Growth for these purposes, therefore TLC adopts motion to ensure pilots will be conducted in sample districts in school year 2013-2014, including looking at different approaches to analyzing growth for educator effectiveness purposes

Responsible Parties: Teachers' & Leaders Council; Deputy Superintendent & Title II a, Select School Districts, Nevada Department of Education
Evidence: TLC Meeting notes for May, 2012
http://nde.doe.nv.gov/Teachers_Leaders_Meetings.html
Nevada Teacher Evaluation Framework and *Nevada Administrator Evaluation Framework(Appendix 1)*

MAY 2012

TLC Chair and NDE Deputy Superintendent present to Legislative Committee on Education

- NDE to collaborate with school districts to implement limited piloting of the Nevada Performance Evaluation Frameworks using different student achievement scoring approaches during SY 2014-2015.
- Timeline for implementation expected to change in 2013 Legislative Session (February – June 2013) to permit purposeful phasing in of Frameworks

Responsible Parties: Teachers' & Leaders Council; Deputy Superintendent, Nevada Department of Education
Evidence: May 9, 2012 Legislative Committee on Education Meeting notes
http://leg.state.nv.us/Interim/76th2011/Committee/Scheduler/committeeIndex.cfm?ID=26
And PowerPoint Presentation included in *(Appendix 1)*

JUNE 2012

Teachers and Leaders Council recommends Teacher and Administrator Frameworks to Nevada State Board of Education
Responsible Parties: Teachers' & Leaders Council; Deputy Superintendent, Nevada Department of Education
Evidence: Agenda, Nevada State Board of Education Meeting of June 1, 2012
http://www.doe.nv.gov/BoardEd/Meetings/2012/2012-06-01_AmendedAgenda_BOE.pdf

2013-2014 *Validation Study in 11 Nevada Districts*

Eleven Nevada districts pilot Nevada Educator Performance Framework NPEF

- Test elements of the system

NDE Continues system refinements

- Address considerations for teachers of non-tested grades & subjects
- Contract for Validation Study during SY 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 to evaluate system for quality, reliability, validity, fairness, consistency, objectivity
- Apply lessons learned to improve system

Responsible Parties: NDE, school districts, and Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs)
Obstacles and challenges: Capacity to implement a fully aligned system addressing educator effectiveness will be a challenge. High quality training will be needed for evaluators, with checks & balances needed to ensure inter-rater reliability and adherence to mandates of the prescribed system. The work with participating districts will assist in testing capacity to fulfill system requirements. The NDE, school districts, and RPDPs will also need to reallocate existing resources to ensure professional development is responsive to needs determined through evaluation of teachers and administrators.
Districts will need to partner with local teacher & administrator associations to expand access to professional development and to negotiate system elements that must be addressed through collective bargaining agreements. Leadership for ongoing system development, implementation, enhancement and monitoring will be provided through the NDE Superintendent's Office, the Office of Assessment, Program Accountability and Curriculum; and the Office of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs.

2013-2014 Early Implementation and Testing of the System

Nevada State Board of Education adopts regulations for Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) in Fall of 2013

Professional Development resources and training provided by RPDPs to teachers and

administrators in all Nevada school districts

Aligned evaluation model created for related service personnel

Interested LEAs apply to use alternate data collection tools to generate data for uniform ratings per NDE approval

Local Data Systems created or refined to provide linkages between students, educators, and courses.

NDE prepares to deliver student achievement data files to LEAs

WestEd Validation Study analyzes system components & tools for validity, defensibility, fairness

Nevada districts engage in testing of all system components and of readiness to provide data to inform improvement

- Evaluate system for quality, reliability, validity, fairness, consistency, objectivity
- Apply lessons learned - changes to system ensure thoughtful implementation in 2015-2016
- Districts employ NDE-authorized tools to implement Teacher and Administrator Frameworks within established State parameters
- NDE oversight ensures pilot processes in accordance with State statutes & regulations

Responsible Parties: NDE, Districts, RPDPs, WestEd
Evidence: Changes in system that are created
Obstacles and Challenges: (See 2013-2014 Validation Study above)

2014-2016 Implement Full NEPF or Authorized Parallel Model for All NV Educators
2014-2016
WestEd Validation Study analyzes system itself for validity, defensibility, fairness- Evaluation of system informs continuous improvement **Guided by Senate Bill 407, NV Legislature determines whether NEPF will be the single system of evaluation or if a parallel State-authorized system of current requirements aligned to the NEPF will be in place temporarily during 2014-2015.** **With the Internal Finance Committee's June 2014 decision to continue the Validation Study for 2014-2015, districts will apply for authorization to implement parallel systems that meet legislative requirements for evaluating teachers and administrators. District Boards of Trustees will submit proposals that meet the criteria provided by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) for authorization. Authorization by the NDE will be dependent on the alignment of the proposal to NRS 391.31214, NRS 391.31215, and inclusion of features of the NEPF.**
2014-2015

While the NEPF is delayed for 2014-2015, all Nevada districts implement the authorized parallel system. All school districts shall comply with the policies for the evaluation of teachers and administrators prescribed by NRS 391.31214 (pertaining to teachers) and NRS 391.31215 (pertaining to administrators) for the 2014-2015 school year.

For those educators within each district participating in the Validation Study during 2014-2015, the NEPF and the district's parallel system will provide two evaluations. However, evaluations conducted for the Validation Study may not be used for decisions regarding the suspension, demotion, dismissal and refusal to reemploy.

Program planners, evaluators, and educators will use data to inform improved practice and system elements so all students will be college- and career-ready on exiting high school.

- Districts employ NDE–authorized tools to implement Teacher and Administrator Frameworks within established State parameters
- NDE oversight ensures processes in accordance with State statutes & regulations
- NEPF or authorized parallel model
- Teachers receive ratings based on 2014-2015 performance in late summer 2015 including Student Achievement data on proficiency, gap reduction, and Growth provided by NDE to districts in late August 2015
    - Informs decision-making for all phases of educators' professional experience
    - Builds capacity to meet learning needs of all students to attain college-career readiness
    - Professional Growth Opportunities provided to NV teachers and administrators in response to data from NEPF or authorized parallel model

Responsible Parties: NDE, Districts, RPDPs, Internal Finance Committee (Legislature), WestEd
Evidence: System monitoring data
Obstacles and Challenges: (See 2013-2014 Validation Study above)

2015-2017 Full System Implementation

2015-2016 Nevada teachers and administrators evaluated with the NEPF without regard to additional data sources.
Dependent on contingent Validation Study of 2014-2015 personnel decisions may be postponed until 2016-2017.

2016-2017 NEPF System Guides Decisions

Nevada teachers and administrators evaluated without regard to additional data sources; personnel decisions to be made.