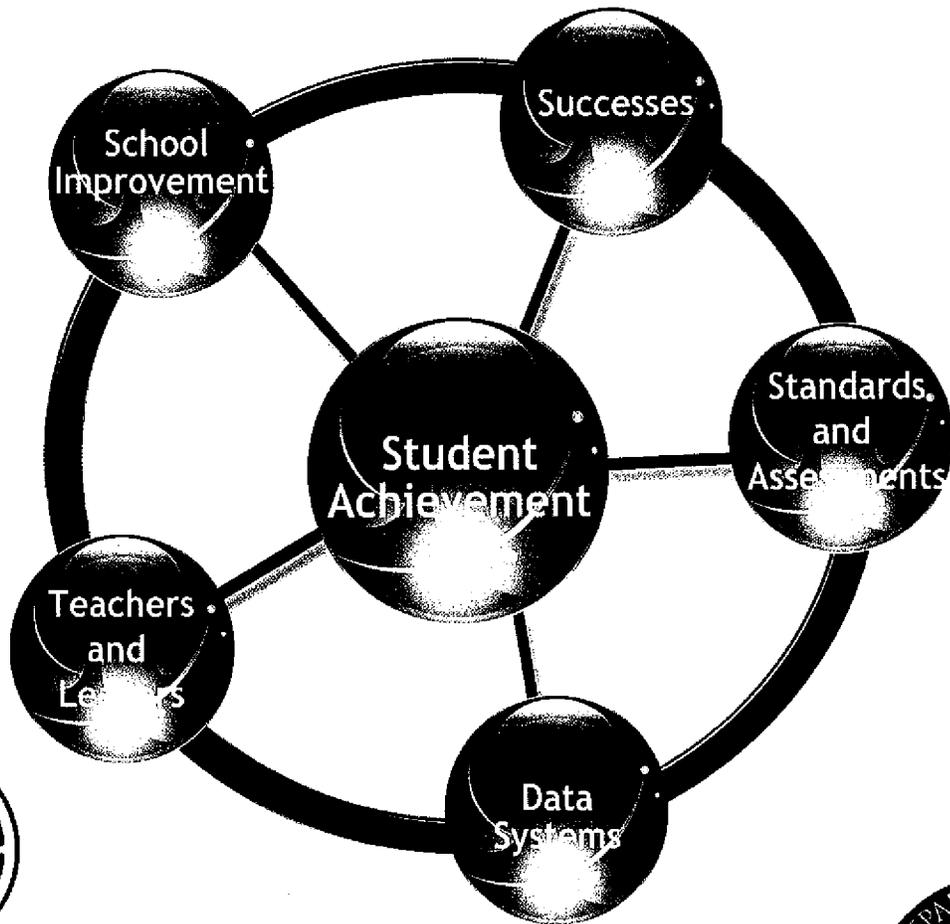


Arkansas Race to the Top Grant Application Phase I



January 2010



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell
Commissioner

January 15, 2010

State Board
of Education

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The Honorable Arne Duncan
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

If Arkansas had known that there would be a Race to the Top in 2010, it would be easy to claim that we had spent the last decade or so in training, preparing ourselves to move both strongly and nimbly through this competition. Indeed, our State – with the partnership of 253 out of the State's 264 Local Education Agencies, representing 98 percent of Arkansas's public school students, and 116 teacher associations and related partners – has poised itself perfectly to compete in the Race to the Top.

Arkansas, however, has not prepared for this competition because of the exciting possibility of winning a valuable competitive grant. Instead, the State has worked much of the last decade to purposefully pursue legislation, policies, partnerships and practices to dramatically boost the academic performance of our students. We have already reaped rewards for these efforts, as the positive results we were hoping for emerged well before expected. Yet, we know that by winning the Race to the Top competition, we can *and will* propel our State's education system and our students' performance to levels not yet seen.

Historically, Arkansas ranked at or near the bottom of almost any education listing released. These past few years have seen a major shift in trajectory of performance as students' scores have climbed on both State and national indicators, such as the Arkansas Benchmark Exams, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Advanced Placement (AP). In 2009, for the first time, more than 60 percent of students scored proficient on every literacy and mathematics Arkansas Benchmark exam in third through eighth grades as well as on the End-of-Course Algebra I and Geometry exams. On NAEP, our scores now are near the middle of the pack of states' scores. In terms of improvement on NAEP for economically disadvantaged and racial student subgroups, we have been recognized by Education Trust and others for leading the way. The College Board has recognized Arkansas nearly every year since 2005 for increasing both student participation and performance in AP and has named the Arkansas Model for AP policies one for other states to emulate.

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Little Rock, AR
72201-1019
(501) 682-4475
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The Honorable Arne Duncan
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Though we are proud of these advances, Arkansas is not content to be in the middle of the pack. Our small State is more than ready to assume a spot at the lead in the full spectrum of educational indicators. We believe our Race to the Top application demonstrates our desire and ability to quickly move to this next level. This application represents the strategizing and, more importantly, the dreaming of education, business and civic partners across our State as we formulated a picture of an ideal education system. Together, we have visualized:

- an education system that believes educating a child begins at birth
- an education system fueled by a meaningful growth model that is defined by student achievement outcomes rather than educational inputs
- a system of education that incorporates the latest best practices as identified by a new Arkansas Office of Innovation
- a system in which teachers and principals readily and capably access student performance data from formative and interim assessments to daily develop instructional strategies
- a system that fairly evaluates teachers and principals according to their performance and impact on student achievement
- a system in which consistently low-performing schools are given the resources to develop the capacity to become well-performing schools and produce students who are as ready to enter college or career-training pathways as those from any school in the nation
- a system in which students are identified early as potential dropouts and are given the proper interventions to assist them to succeed in school
- a system in which higher education is provided resources to implement innovative teacher preparation programs
- an education system that prioritizes science, technology, engineering and mathematics in its preparation of teachers and in its teaching of students

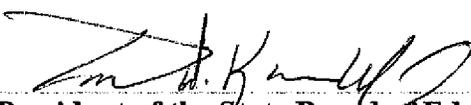
Arkansas's application for the Race to the Top Grant Funds contains these elements and more. Therefore, it is with pride and optimistic anticipation that I submit Arkansas's application for the Race to the Top Grant.

Sincerely,



Tom W. Kimbrell, Ed.D.
Arkansas Commissioner of Education

**RACE TO THE TOP APPLICATION ASSURANCES
(CFDA No. 84.395A)**

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): Office of Governor Mike Beebe	Applicant's Mailing Address: Office of Governor Mike Beebe State Capitol, Suite 238 Little Rock, AR 72201
Employer Identification Number:	Organizational DUNS:
State Race to the Top Contact Name: (Single point of contact for communication) Heather Gage	Contact Position and Office: Arkansas Department of Education Policy Director
Contact Telephone: 501-682-3667	Contact E-mail Address: heather.gage@arkansas.gov
Required Applicant Signatures: To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct. I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Governor Mike Beebe	Telephone: 501-683-6424
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: 	Date: 1/16/10
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Dr. Tom Kimbrell	Telephone: 501-682-4201
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: 	Date: 1/14/10
President of the State Board of Education (Printed Name): Dr. Naccaman Williams	Telephone:
Signature of the President of the State Board of Education: 	Date: 1/13/10

ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, REPORTING AND OTHER ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Accountability, Transparency and Reporting Assurances

The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures that the State will comply with all of the accountability, transparency, and reporting requirements that apply to the Race to the Top program, including the following:

- For each year of the program, the State will submit a report to the Secretary, at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may require, that describes:
 - the uses of funds within the State;
 - how the State distributed the funds it received;
 - the number of jobs that the Governor estimates were saved or created with the funds;
 - the State's progress in reducing inequities in the distribution of highly qualified teachers, implementing a State longitudinal data system, and developing and implementing valid and reliable assessments for limited English proficient students and students with disabilities; and
 - if applicable, a description of each modernization, renovation, or repair project approved in the State application and funded, including the amounts awarded and project costs (ARRA Division A, Section 14008)

- The State will cooperate with any U.S. Comptroller General evaluation of the uses of funds and the impact of funding on the progress made toward closing achievement gaps (ARRA Division A, Section 14009)

- If the State uses funds for any infrastructure investment, the State will certify that the investment received the full review and vetting required by law and that the chief executive accepts responsibility that the investment is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds. This certification will include a description of the investment, the estimated total cost, and the amount of covered funds to be used. The certification will be posted on the State's website and linked to www.Recovery.gov. A State or local agency may not use funds under the ARRA for infrastructure investment funding unless this certification is made and posted. (ARRA Division A, Section 1511)

- The State will submit reports, within 10 days after the end of each calendar quarter, that contain the information required under section 1512(c) of the ARRA in accordance with any guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget or the Department. (ARRA Division A, Section 1512(c))

- The State will cooperate with any appropriate Federal Inspector General's examination of records under the program. (ARRA Division A, Section 1515)

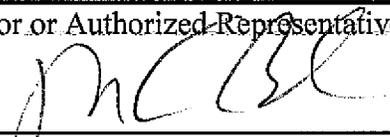
Other Assurances and Certifications

The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures or certifies the following:

- The State will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B (Assurances for Non-Construction Programs) and to the extent consistent with the State's application, OMB Standard Form 424D (Assurances for Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to records; conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders and regulations.
- With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the State will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix B); and the State will require the full certification, as set forth in 34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix A, in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers.
- The State will comply with all of the operational and administrative provisions in Title XV and XIV of the ARRA, including Buy American Requirements (ARRA Division A, Section 1605), Wage Rate Requirements (section 1606), and any applicable environmental impact requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970 (NEPA), as amended, (42 U.S.C. 4371 et seq.) (ARRA Division A, Section 1609). In using ARRA funds for infrastructure investment, recipients will comply with the requirement regarding Preferences for Quick Start Activities (ARRA Division A, Section 1602).
- Any local educational agency (LEA) receiving funding under this program will have on file with the State a set of assurances that meets the requirements of section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232e).
- Any LEA receiving funding under this program will have on file with the State (through either its Stabilization Fiscal Stabilization Fund application or another U.S. Department of Education Federal grant) a description of how the LEA will comply with the requirements of section 427 of GEPA (20 U.S.C. 1228a). The description must include information on the steps the LEA proposes to take to permit students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers (including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age) that impede access to, or participation in, the program.
- The State and other entities will comply with the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), including the following provisions as applicable: 34 CFR Part 74—Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations; 34 CFR Part 75—Direct Grant Programs; 34 CFR Part 77—Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations; 34 CFR Part

80– Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, including the procurement provisions; 34 CFR Part 81– General Education Provisions Act–Enforcement; 34 CFR Part 82– New Restrictions on Lobbying; 34 CFR Part 84–Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance); 34 CFR Part 85–Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

SIGNATURE BLOCK FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIAL

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name):	
	
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor:	Date:
Governor Mike Beebe	1/16/10

State Attorney General Certification

I certify that the State's description of, and statements and conclusions concerning, State law, statute, and regulation in its application are complete, accurate, and constitute a reasonable interpretation of State law, statute, and regulation.

(See especially Eligibility Requirement (b), Selection Criteria (B)(1), (D)(1), (E)(1), (F)(2), (F)(3).)

I certify that the State does not have any legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers at the State level to linking data on student achievement (as defined in this notice) or student growth (as defined in this notice) to teachers and principals for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation.

State Attorney General or Authorized Representative (Printed Name):

Ali M. Brady, Assistant Attorney General

Telephone:

(501) 682-1319

Signature of the State Attorney General or Authorized Representative:



Date:

Jan. 15, 2010

(A) State Success Factors (125 total points)

(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEAs' participation in it (65 points)

The extent to which—

(i) The State has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide, establishes a clear and credible path to achieving these goals, and is consistent with the specific reform plans that the State has proposed throughout its application; (5 points)

(ii) The participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) are strongly committed to the State's plans and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas, as evidenced by Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) (as set forth in Appendix D) or other binding agreements between the State and its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) that include— (45 points)

(a) Terms and conditions that reflect strong commitment by the participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to the State's plans;

(b) Scope-of-work descriptions that require participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plans; and

(c) Signatures from as many as possible of the LEA superintendent (or equivalent), the president of the local school board (or equivalent, if applicable), and the local teachers' union leader (if applicable) (one signature of which must be from an authorized LEA representative) demonstrating the extent of leadership support within participating LEAs (as defined in this notice); and

(iii) The LEAs that are participating in the State's Race to the Top plans (including considerations of the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K-12 students, and students in poverty) will translate into broad statewide impact, allowing the State to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals, overall and by student subgroup, for—(15 points)

(a) Increasing student achievement in (at a minimum) reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;

(b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;

(c) Increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice); and

(d) Increasing college enrollment (as defined in this notice) and increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit that is applicable to a degree within two years of enrollment in an institution of higher education.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion, as well as projected goals as described in (A)(1)(iii). The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a

minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (A)(1)(ii):

- An example of the State's standard Participating LEA MOU, and description of variations used, if any.
- The completed summary table indicating which specific portions of the State's plan each LEA is committed to implementing, and relevant summary statistics (see Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b), below).
- The completed summary table indicating which LEA leadership signatures have been obtained (see Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(c), below).

Evidence for (A)(1)(iii):

- The completed summary table indicating the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K-12 students, and students in poverty (see Summary Table for (A)(1)(iii), below).
- Tables and graphs that show the State's goals, overall and by subgroup, requested in the criterion, together with the supporting narrative. In addition, describe what the goals would look like were the State not to receive an award under this program.

Evidence for (A)(1)(ii) and (A)(1)(iii):

- The completed detailed table, by LEA, that includes the information requested in the criterion (see Detailed Table for (A)(1), below).

Recommended maximum response length: Ten pages (excluding tables)

(A)(1)(i) The State has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide, establishes a clear and credible path to achieving these goals, and is consistent with the specific reform plans that the State has proposed throughout its application.

"We live in a world where we compete not only with our neighboring states for the best jobs, but also with countries overseas. If we want to survive in the global marketplace, we must be fully prepared to fill the jobs of the 21st century." - Governor
Mike Beebe

Readiness for college and readiness for careers require the same rigorous academic foundation and every Arkansas high school graduate should have this foundation. Ideally, support for this academic foundation should begin in preschool and continue through career placement. College and career readiness in Arkansas goes beyond preparation for success in entry-level, credit-bearing courses at two-year and four-year colleges and universities, to completion of postsecondary academic and

technical degree programs, and entry into career pathways. Achieving the ambitious goal of transforming the Arkansas workforce into a global workforce requires all students to have access to the academic resources associated with successful completion of postsecondary academic and technical degree programs.

In his seminal works, *Tools in the Tool Box Revisited*, Adelman (1998/1999/2006) identified ~~“academic resources,” particularly rigorous mathematics courses, as one of the most important~~ variables in his explanatory model of college completion indicators, accounting for 43 percent of the variance in completion of a bachelor's degree based on data from students followed from grade ten to age 30. Other researchers found that college readiness is evident by grade eight or earlier (Stage & Hossler, 1989; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001; Mulvenon, Denny, Stegman, Airola, & McKenzie. S, 2004). To be college and career ready in the 21st century, students need to be adept problem-solvers and critical thinkers who can contribute and apply knowledge in novel contexts and unforeseen situations. This level of readiness, as well as the academic resources to support this readiness, requires *both*, preparation for and access to, a rigorous high school curriculum. Arkansas has the statutory requirements to accomplish this through the Smart Arkansas Initiative, including the requirement of, and incentives for, completion of the Smart Core for graduation:

- Four units of mathematics, including Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II and a fourth unit of higher-level mathematics such as statistics or Calculus;
- Four units of English;
- Three units of laboratory-based science; and
- Three units of social studies.

The Smart Arkansas Initiative was created to provide educators with the resources to provide high quality instruction from kindergarten through graduation. It is Arkansas's comprehensive system of integrated reform initiatives to provide educators with curriculum, instruction and assessment resources, as well as accountability, to enable high quality instruction that is rigorous and coherent from pre-kindergarten through graduation. Arkansas's Race to the Top plan builds on the foundation of this comprehensive system to develop capacity for long-term sustainability of reform efforts initiated through Smart Arkansas.

Arkansas's Theory of Change

The State has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas. Together, with many partners, Arkansas has visualized:

- an education system that believes educating a child begins at birth;
- an education system fueled by a meaningful growth model that is defined by student achievement outcomes rather than educational inputs;
- a system of education that incorporates the latest best practices as identified by a new Office of Innovation;
- a system in which teachers and principals readily and capably access student performance data from formative and interim assessments to daily develop instructional strategies;
- a system that fairly evaluates teachers and principals according to their performance and impact on student achievement;
- a system in which persistently low performing schools are given the resources to develop the capacity to become high-performing schools and produce students who are as ready to enter college or a career-training pathways as those from any school in the nation;
- a system in which students are identified early as potential dropouts and are given the proper interventions to assist them to succeed in school;
- a system in which higher education is provided resources to implement innovative teacher preparation programs; and
- an education system that prioritizes science, technology, engineering and mathematics in its preparation of teachers and in its teaching of students;

Through a “systems alignment,” student data in the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) will be merged with other sources of student data such as interim and formative assessment data, Annual Improvement Plans, Individual Reading Intervention, Individual Academic Improvement Plans, demographic data, and perceptual data. School data (teacher evaluations, principal evaluation, school process data, perceptual data, and school improvement planning) will be merged with student data and accessed in a comprehensive Instructional Improvement System (IIS). The IIS will host the standards tools in a format that enables the classroom teacher to quickly access the standards and utilize curricular tools to plan instructional lessons and formative assessments. Data from formative and interim assessments may be uploaded to the IIS to provide timely review of student progress for instructional changes or interventions.

These linked data systems will allow classroom teachers, principals, districts, regions, and the State to align specific professional development needs. Through the IIS, face-to-face and online professional development courses will be suggested to the teacher based on multiple measures of student achievement. This provides differentiation by teacher and student needs.

Linking these systems provides the opportunity to have data-driven decision making at every level – classroom to State. ~~Decisions may be made based upon the review of multiple measures to identify~~ the root cause of problems. The IIS will provide tools to enable educators to plan, implement, and monitor progress of implementation. Evaluation and analysis of the return on investment will be available in a timely manner. Communication and sharing of strategies will be enhanced by the transparency of information.

Through Race to the Top funding, Arkansas has the opportunity to merge all efforts and expedite the process of getting resources, tools, and training to classroom teachers thereby meeting the differentiated learning needs of students. Students are the priority of the Arkansas proposal. We are eliminating the excuses and finding the solutions by making data-driven decisions that improve student achievement.

(A)(1)(ii) The participating LEAs are strongly committed to the State's plans and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas, as evidenced by Memoranda of Understanding; and (A)(1)(iii) The LEAs that are participating in the State's Race to the Top plans (including considerations of the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K-12 students, and students in poverty) will translate into broad statewide impact, allowing the State to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals, overall and by student subgroup.

Arkansas's new Commissioner of Education, Dr. Tom Kimbrell, is focused on providing quality, ongoing support to the State's 264 local education agencies (LEAs). Dr. Kimbrell talks to educational leaders about the need to increase the level of trust between the State Education Agency and the local school districts and charter schools. It is through this trust that the State can move to new and higher levels of achievement and success. Education leaders have put their trust in the State with this Race to the Top application. Within a very short period of time, 253 out of the State's 264 LEA superintendents and Charter School directors (representing 98 percent of Arkansas's public school students and 96% of teachers) along with their board presidents and 116 teacher association

leaders, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (*Appendix A-1*) stating their commitment to ensure effective implementation of the State's plan.

During the last several months, LEAs in Arkansas have also shown their commitment to using the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to meet the goals set forth by the US Department of Education (USDOE) in Standards and Assessment (and learning), Data Quality, ~~Teacher Effectiveness, and Intensive Support and Effective Interventions. For every ARRA dollar~~ the LEAs spend, they must provide an explanation of how the funds will be used to meet at least one of the goals.

Arkansas is demonstrating an "all hands on deck" commitment to improving student achievement. We recognize the economic impact and quality of living improvement that learning success – Pre-K through college and career – brings to our State and its people. Education is our ticket to a great and prosperous Arkansas.

See *Appendix A-2* for Summary Table (A)(1)(ii)(a).

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b)

Elements of State Reform Plans	Number of LEAs Participating (#)	Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)
B. Standards and Assessments		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	253	100%
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems	253	100%
(ii) Professional development on use of data	253	100%
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers	253	100%
D. Great Teachers and Leaders		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth	253	100%
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems	253	100%
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations	253	100%
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development	253	100%
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification	253	100%
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal	253	100%
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development	253	100%
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development	253	100%
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	14	100% **

** The percent of participating LEAs is listed at 100% because only 14 schools are eligible for services in this section.

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(c)

Signatures acquired from participating LEAs:			
Number of Participating LEAs with all applicable signatures			
	Number of Signatures Obtained (#)	Number of Signatures Applicable (#)	Percentage (%) (Obtained / Applicable)
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)	253	264	96%
President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)	253	264	96%
Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable)	116	191	61%

Summary Table for (A)(1)(iii)

	Participating LEAs (#)	Statewide (#)	Percentage of Total Statewide (%) (Participating LEAs / Statewide)
LEAs	253	264	96%
Schools	1055	1094	96%
K-12 Students	456,557	466,391	98%
Students in poverty	207,129	258,816*	80%

* Based the number of public school students who are eligible for free or reduced priced lunch.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain proposed plans
(30 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality overall plan to—

(i) Ensure that it has the capacity required to implement its proposed plans by— *(20 points)*

- (a) Providing strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement the statewide education reform plans the State has proposed;
- (b) Supporting participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) in successfully implementing the education reform plans the State has proposed, through such activities as identifying promising practices, evaluating these practices' effectiveness, ceasing ineffective practices, widely disseminating and replicating the effective practices statewide, holding participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) accountable for progress and performance, and intervening where necessary;
- (c) Providing effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing its Race to the Top grant in such areas as grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and reporting, and fund disbursement;
- (d) Using the funds for this grant, as described in the State's budget and accompanying budget narrative, to accomplish the State's plans and meet its targets, including where feasible, by coordinating, reallocating, or repurposing education funds from other Federal, State, and local sources so that they align with the State's Race to the Top goals; and
- (e) Using the fiscal, political, and human capital resources of the State to continue, after the period of funding has ended, those reforms funded under the grant for which there is evidence of success; and

(ii) Use support from a broad group of stakeholders to better implement its plans, as evidenced by the strength of the statements or actions of support from— *(10 points)*

- (a) The State's teachers and principals, which include the State's teachers' unions or statewide teacher associations; and
- (b) Other critical stakeholders, such as the State's legislative leadership; charter school authorizers and State charter school membership associations (if applicable); other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, civil rights, and education association leaders); Tribal schools; parent, student, and community organizations (e.g., parent-teacher associations, nonprofit organizations, local education foundations, and community-based organizations); and institutions of higher education.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. The State's response to (A)(2)(i)(d) will be addressed in the budget section (Section VIII of the application). Attachments, such as letters of support or commitment, should be summarized in the text box below and organized with a summary table in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (A)(2)(i)(d):

- The State's budget, as completed in Section VIII of the application. The narrative that accompanies and explains the budget and how it connects to the State's plan, as completed in Section VIII of the application.

Evidence for (A)(2)(ii):

- A summary in the narrative of the statements or actions and inclusion of key statements or actions in the Appendix.

Recommended maximum response length: Five pages (excluding budget and budget narrative)

(A)(2)(i)(a) Providing strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement the statewide education reform plans the State has proposed.

Through dramatically increased State funding for public K-12 education and through its efforts with Smart Arkansas, the State has demonstrated its ability to implement coherent and systemic reforms, as evidenced by the steady increase in the percentage of students meeting standards in literacy and mathematics on State assessments and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Despite the success of these early reform efforts, Arkansas still faces significant challenges in achieving its goal of increasing students' readiness, and successful completion of, postsecondary academic and technical degree programs. Arkansas is 49th among the States in the percentage of students who receive bachelor's degrees despite an above average high school graduation rate and a 65 percent college entry rate. Moreover, as a highly rural State, Arkansas faces human and resource capacity challenges in implementing education reform.

At the same time, even with these challenges and others, the State has made significant inroads by: increasing the amount of State funding dedicated to high-quality preschool programs to more than \$111 million per year; being one of the first States to participate in the America Diploma Project, through which it developed college and career ready standards; being one of the first four States to develop a State data system that has all 10 elements recommended by the Data Quality Campaign;

securing approval by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) of a growth model of accountability, as well as a differentiated accountability system; adopting the Smart Core, college ready default curriculum; securing funding for Smart Core incentives for schools that increase the number of students who take the rigorous curriculum; through its Department of Higher Education, securing the adoption by all of its postsecondary institutions of a uniform ACT score as the basis for determining placement in remedial courses; and implementing "Say Go College Week," a Career Coaches Initiative, and the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program. Further, through its partnership with the National Office for Research on Measurement and Evaluation Systems (NORMES) at the University of Arkansas, existing and potential barriers to achieving college and career-readiness have been identified and monitored including accountability measures for effectiveness in identifying schools that are not demonstrating alignment with rigorous State academic standards from kindergarten through graduation.

Arkansas's strengths include the Governor's Workforce Cabinet, a leadership group across education and economic development agencies that works to improve economic and educational opportunities statewide; a strong State leadership role in improving education; and achieved increased State financial support for adequacy in education, which has resulted in significant federal stimulus funds that are potentially available for education reform efforts. In addition, Governor Beebe fully recognizes and champions increased educational attainment as the strongest tool to a competitive and vibrant Arkansas that provides opportunity for its citizens.

The ADE partnership with NORMES provides an example of how the State can build on existing capacity to implement and sustain proposed plans. The ADE initiated an ADE/NORMES partnership to capitalize on the academic resources in statistics, large-scale data management and modeling, and research through the University of Arkansas and the NORMES research office. The ADE benefited from a dedicated, credible research organization that is focused on improving education, educational modeling, and research on how to improve school systems. NORMES evaluated various accountability models for Arkansas with the specific goal to help determine the effectiveness of the models in identifying schools' progress in meeting State accountability requirements, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and college preparation of its high school students. At the request of the ADE and Arkansas General Assembly, NORMES calculates annual remediation and grade inflation indices to identify high schools where required coursework may not

meet the level of rigor specified for the Smart Core. In addition, NORMES conducted P-16 modeling of student and school college completion indicators to assist educators in identifying academic risk factors for students in the middle grades and junior high school. NORMES also successfully piloted teacher effectiveness models utilizing growth and performance indicators, among others, with several LEAs. Lessons learned from these pilots can inform development of teacher and principal effectiveness growth models.

Arkansas's commitment is unwavering. Over 300 people attended community forums around the State to provide input into this Race to the Top application. A group of 30 external stakeholders met to provide detailed guidance on the proposal and are committed to being involved in its implementation to ensure success. Leaders within the Departments of Human Services (Early Childhood and Education Division), Education, Career Education, and Higher Education (and some higher education institutions), the Association of Two-Year Colleges, K-12 education leaders, teacher, administrator and school board associations, business and non-profits have all provided the information for this application and will work together with P-12 educators, higher education institutions, and all other stakeholders to ensure successful implementation of Arkansas's Race to the Top plans.

Through dedicated State and local leadership, Arkansas infused an enormous amount of dollars in PK-12 education. Roughly \$700 million was added to the State's education budget from 2004 to 2006. Through the collective work and firm dedication of the Governor's Office, the legislature, business community, educators, education partners, parents and students, Arkansas has proven that with increased resources it can achieve significant results. Section A (3) will provide further details, but the message is clear – when viewed over time, every academic indicator in Arkansas is on the rise. Arkansas academic improvement is no accident. It is through dedication of those listed above, and especially the teachers in the classroom, that achievements have been fostered.

Other core strengths in Arkansas that continually help us to move education forward include:

- Arkansas's Small Size (2.7 million people) – The rural nature of Arkansas's population and LEAs engenders a higher level of LEA reliance on State-led leadership, innovation and risk-taking in public education when compared with other States in the nation.

- Strong Education Policy – The State-level executive and legislative leadership has a history of strong legislative policy supporting public education that places it at the top of the nation in terms of public education reform friendly laws. Specifically, Arkansas State government leaders have ensured that education funding is the single overriding priority, as evidenced by:

- ~~The Lake View adequacy court case settlement (see section F(1)) and subsequent adequacy funding;~~
- Sustained and increased K-12 education adequacy funding over the last few years;
- Enacting Ark. Code Ann. § 19-5-1227 (Arkansas Educational Adequacy Fund) to ensure that the State meets its financial obligations to provide an adequate educational system;
- Appropriating tiered poverty funding that progressively increases funding per pupil as poverty percentages increases;
- Investing in over \$740 million in a facilities funding program;
- Investing over \$111 million in early childhood education;
- Appropriating numerous financial incentives for teachers and principals to relocate to high-need, high-poverty areas;
- Requiring 60 hours of professional development annually for licensure;
- Instituting a longitudinal data systems (ranked at the top of the nation per US Chamber of Commerce), already linked to higher education;
- Appropriating funding to pay for ACT (suite of assessments), PSAT, SAT; and
- Enacting legislation requiring Advanced Placement (AP) in the four core areas and appropriating funding for the State to pay for the students' AP exam.

So why have these core strengths not created statewide sustainable success for all students?

The comprehensive, coherent plan for achieving ambitious goals has been developed and implemented at the foundational level, that is, at the State leadership level. However, these must be transferred and deployed at the LEA level if reform if reform efforts are to impact student outcomes. The need is significant – currently Arkansas ranks 49th in the nation in the percentage of adults 25 and older with bachelor's degrees. Only 18.2 percent of Arkansas adults hold baccalaureate or higher degrees. Only 16 percent of Arkansas ninth graders will graduate from college. Of those students who entered college, fifty-three percent of all college freshmen in the State had to be remediated in 2007, at a cost to the State of \$53.8 million.

Transferring the State leadership's core strengths to the LEA level requires deployment, through existing State and regional support structures, of a system of State support and targeted intervention strategies designed to build State, regional and LEA leadership capacity. These intervention

strategies must specifically impact what happens in the classroom, not just the committee room. Many State policies that have been established and implemented over the past decade have not been deployed systemically at the LEA level because of the State's limited human capacity to identify and meet the needs of its diverse LEAs. Thus, for some LEAs, comprehensive and coherent reform efforts have been operationalized as isolated and mechanical implementation of various programs or ~~interventions with little or no impact on the system as a whole.~~ Islands of success exist in LEAs that have integrated Smart Arkansas reform efforts and strategies from intervention programs such as Reading First into a coherent system of responsive education.

What will build upon our core strengths and address challenges through Race to the Top funding?

Education reform in Arkansas breaks down in the local implementation of statewide reforms. This is partly due to Arkansas's lack of human capacity, to support schools and LEAs in their efforts to implement these State reforms. Although rigorous standards may apply to all schools, instruction must be responsive to the needs of the learner, whether that learner is below grade level, on grade level, or above grade level. Supporting schools' varying needs within a comprehensive system requires highly qualified personnel who can analyze local strengths and weaknesses and guide the LEA as it implements reforms consistent with the statewide efforts, yet responsive to local circumstances. For example, Arkansas is second in the nation in the number of students taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses. This is largely due to legislative action mandating all high schools offer multiple AP courses, provide funding for students to take an AP exam, and provide funding for the professional development of teachers of AP courses.

The success of these policies led to Exxon Mobil's investment of \$13.2 million to further AP access and performance. From a statewide perspective, these initiatives have been successful. AP participation has increased dramatically. However, the statewide percentage of passing scores for AP exams is only 29 percent. Further, this passing rate varies from 0 percent to 100 percent depending on the high school. Obviously, implementation of AP efforts and the rigor of AP courses are not perfectly correlated.

This situation also exists in the statewide longitudinal data system initiative (SLDS). Although Arkansas met all 10 of the Data Quality Campaign's 10 essential elements in 2007, the availability of data at the school level is still limited and fragmented among numerous systems. Similarly, most school and district administrators would indicate they use data to support decisions, but in many

cases the use of data is perfunctory, and mechanically summarized for compliance purposes rather than analyzed to formulate and test hypotheses about what is working and is not working within the school or district setting. This is more evident at the classroom level where teachers want and need additional professional development to help interpret and use assessment data to plan instruction. Arkansas's Race to the Top plan provides the opportunity to integrate the efforts supported through the longitudinal data systems (LDS) grants with standards, assessment and instruction efforts. The

State's Race to the Top plan will move the LDS efforts to a more aligned, supporting role intended for data storage and data use, within a comprehensive system of reforms.

Race to the Top funds will allow Arkansas to build statewide capacity by equipping staff in the schools, districts and regional support centers with the skills and materials to move from these islands of success to a continuous plain of coherent systemic reforms.

(A)(2)(i)(b) Supporting participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) in successfully implementing the education reform plans the State has proposed, through such activities as identifying promising practices, evaluating these practices' effectiveness, ceasing ineffective practices, widely disseminating and replicating the effective practices statewide, holding participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) accountable for progress and performance, and intervening where necessary.

Office of Innovation

Arkansas has a strong history of educational reform and possesses an infrastructure of systems that supports low-performing LEAs, but there is a need to create a new focus on reform that will allow all schools to meet the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This necessitates a change in focus with a new emphasis on innovation. The creation of an Office of Innovation would foster an innovative and entrepreneurial approach to the dissemination and implementation of successful reform efforts. The Office of Innovation will initiate a fresh approach to educational reform that engages all stakeholders and communities in identifying successful, proven, reform solutions to be shared with the State's LEAs. Its mission would be to deliver innovative educational solutions that help our LEAs achieve what they want most – results in increasing academic achievement.

The Race to the Top funds would allow the ADE to open an Office of Innovation that will support all other reform efforts. The Office of Innovation would allow ADE to take a new role that would not

be regulatory in nature, but would consist of establishing and enhancing educational entrepreneurial efforts and fostering collaboration among the State's higher education institutions, K-12 education associations, nonprofit research institutes and the business community. The Office of Innovation would provide strategic direction, identification and promotion of successes, communication with stakeholders on a wide array of educational reform efforts and evaluation of innovation-related educational investments in Arkansas, which will be particularly important as we monitor the implementation and successes of Race to the Top

One of the critical areas the Office of Innovation will address is the networking of teacher leaders, administrators and the business community into the critical reform conversations on implementation of the new Common Core, development of a new assessment system, and the reframing of a statewide conversation on reform. Ongoing relationships with the Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center (MC3), the Southwest Regional Education Lab (REL), the Center on Innovation and Improvement, and the National Center for Educational Achievement (NCEA) will provide great partnerships in this effort.

Race to the Top will provide the initial start-up costs and allow the State to build a successful program throughout the grant period. Current State and/or other grant funds will be used to staff positions in the office after the grant expires. For more information about the Office of Innovation, see Invitation Priority 6 on page 181.

(A)(2)(i)(c) Providing effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing its Race to the Top grant in such areas as grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and reporting, and fund disbursement;

Arkansas realizes the total dollar value of its Race to the Top application (\$374,715,335) represents a significant opportunity for LEAs to finally align their local vision for meeting the academic needs of struggling children with the funding required to do so. This opportunity, however, must carry with it substantial accountability. This accountability must be constructed with four key components or pillars:

1. Ongoing, periodic qualitative reviews to be performed LEA by LEA, that match their signed scopes of work in their detailed MOUs with the use of funds and quantitative academic data that indicates the outcomes achieved. The use of qualitative school environment data, quantitative academic principal, teacher and student data, and financial data relating to Race

to the Top must be accomplished systemically in a thoughtful, organized and repetitive manner.

2. Ongoing, periodic qualitative reviews to be performed on other State-level projects outlined in the Race to the Top application that match the intent of the work prescribed within.
3. Tools, processes, feedback loops and other structural levers to coordinate the gathering of information, review of that information, and iterative improvement in data collection, data reporting and data results.
4. Design and transfer this ongoing project management capacity and Office of Accountability capability to an internal team of existing ADE experts post-Race to the Top, to ensure this ongoing accountability and the race to the top continues beyond 4 years even though federal funding stops.

The ADE does not have the internal expertise to perform the level of evaluation that will be required in the four pillars above. Given the importance of launching our Race to the Top program effectively, the benefits of engaging an independent provider possessing leading edge experience in managing similar efforts is significant. Arkansas proposes to spend four percent of its grant on outsourcing this Project Management Office (“PMO”) function to a world-class provider, competitively selected, whose experience and skills would enable Arkansas to leverage and deploy a fully functioning, highly objective and independent PMO that would:

1. Assist in the vetting and validation of the up to 264 LEA MOU Scopes of Work;
2. Monitor and manage the implementation of Race to the Top funds consistent with the LEA MOU Scope of Work and other objectives in the State’s plan;
3. Monitor and manage the implementation of Race to the Top funds at the SEA level and provide independent, objective feedback on how the SEA can increase capacity for SEA investments based on the LEA reviews and other stakeholder reviews; and
4. Develop, cross-train and eventually transfer the PMO capacity from the vendor to an internal team of ADE staff, including the tools, processes, data tracking systems and protocols necessary to continue to monitor and manage the reform after the Race to the Top grant ends with internally identified funds.

Arkansas will prepare the PMO vendor Request for Proposal ready to be issued within 48 hours of a Race to the Top grant award. This will allow the State to aggressively commence ensuring strong, rigorous and comprehensive scopes of work are finalized at the LEA level, the data systems are ready to collect and report Race to the Top related data, and the learning curve to fund deployment is steep

and fast. It is our steadfast intent to change current challenges into a world-class strength over the course of four years.

(A)(2)(i)(d) Using the funds for this grant, as described in the State's budget and accompanying budget narrative, to accomplish the State's plans and meet its targets, including where feasible, by coordinating, reallocating, or repurposing education funds from other Federal, State, and local sources so that they align with the State's Race to the Top goals.

Arkansas would accomplish the four objectives listed in (A)(2)(i)(c) by including them in the scope of the PMO RFP and ensuring the PMO vendor has as part of its deliverables, the accomplishment of these four objectives. A firm with experience in fiscal management of K-12 public education, training programs and analysis, and reallocation of funding sources to promote sustainability efforts will weigh heavily in the Arkansas RFP selection criteria. Arkansas is willing to invest a significant portion of its Race to the Top funds (two to four percent) to ensure every dollar spent is leverageable, sustainable and ultimately delivering of its intended purpose vis-à-vis the Race to the Top application. Arkansas would make available to the USDOE the PMO vendor's objective reports on LEA and SEA use of Race to the Top funds and their fiscal management, sustainability and required training and capacity development. Again, Arkansas is willing to be held accountable to the highest standards available in the marketplace and desires the most objective, independent and quickest path to this high quality of accountability and performance.

(A)(2)(i)(e) Using the fiscal, political, and human capital resources of the State to continue, after the period of funding has ended, those reforms funded under the grant for which there is evidence of success.

In the fall of 2008, Arkansas was one of eight States to be invited to participate in the College and Career Ready Policy Institute. The institute is sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and is coordinated by our partners at Achieve, Data Quality Campaign, Education Counsel, Jobs for the Future and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices.

The Institute is designed to build upon prior reform efforts. Those efforts are focused on our vision to provide students with the course rigor that will prepare them for careers and college and a system to intervene with districts, schools, and students who fall off track. A significant part of our effort is the articulation of 10-year college and career ready stretch goals that will be used to provide transparent public information, through a college and career ready web-site, on how districts and schools are performing against these goals. Our goals include biennial improvements in high school graduation

rates; the percentages of students graduating after having completed the Smart Core Curriculum; the percentage of students graduating after having completed the Smart Core Curriculum along with an AP, IB, or Concurrent Credit course; or having successfully completed a CTE program of study/career focus; the percentage of students not requiring college remediation; percentage enrollment in postsecondary institutions for specified periods and for adults 25 years or above; and percentages of public school graduates and adults 25 years or above receiving a 2- or 4-year postsecondary degree. (See Appendix A-3) Arkansas believes with Race to the Top financial support, we can accelerate these goals.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps (30 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its ability to—

(i) Make progress over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas, and used its ARRA and other Federal and State funding to pursue such reforms; (5 points)

(ii) Improve student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since at least 2003, and explain the connections between the data and the actions that have contributed to — (25 points)

- (a) Increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA;
- (b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA; and
- (c) Increasing high school graduation rates.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (A)(3)(ii):

- NAEP and ESEA results since at least 2003. Include in the Appendix all the data requested in the criterion as a resource for peer reviewers for each year in which a test was given or data was collected. Note that this data will be used for reference only and can be in raw format. In the narrative, provide the analysis of this data and any tables or graphs that best support the narrative.

Recommended maximum response length: Six pages

(A)(3)(i) Make progress over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas, and used its ARRA and other Federal and State funding to pursue such reforms.

Beginning in 2003, with continued leadership from the Governor's Office, the Arkansas General Assembly, the business community, education association and leaders around the State, and the ADE, the State of Arkansas has actively worked to systemically reform the public education system in order to graduate students who are ready for the careers and college demands awaiting them in the 21st century global economy. These efforts have involved greatly increasing funding for education –

investing more than \$500 million in 2004 alone with increases in each of the following General Assemblies to ensure adequacy was maintained – and enacting unprecedented accountability measures for school districts to ensure that the money was and is spent effectively.

The results of these efforts have been remarkable. The underlying culture of education is beginning to shift as Arkansas has experienced dramatic improvement in student performance. This improvement is evidenced by trend lines for both the State's Benchmark Exams and the National Assessment for Educational Progress. Not only has the performance of *all* students exhibited marked gains, but, for the first time, the State has seen a narrowing of the achievement gap among subpopulations of students.

Outside organizations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education and the National Math and Science Initiative have rewarded these successes with sizable grants, illustrating their faith in the State to produce results with its efforts.

In a 2007 newspaper editorial, former Education Commissioner Ken James stated: "Over the decades, we have become so used to falling on the low end of the scale when it comes to educational achievement measures that we find it hard to believe that we can do better. Well, it's time that we begin lifting our chins, throwing back our shoulders and expressing pride in what's being accomplished in our State. We are doing better."

Progress has continued in the years since he wrote those words. Arkansas has enjoyed unprecedented momentum for improving education for our young people, an energy emanating foremost from the Office of Governor Mike Beebe, who consistently delivers the message that education and economic development are his administration's top priorities because one cannot thrive without the other. To that end, Governor Beebe created the Workforce Cabinet, which includes directors from six State agencies that are related to workforce development, with the charge of creating a cohesive school-to-work system that would provide the State with a quality workforce.

Specific accomplishments of the State of Arkansas in recent years as they pertain to the four ARRA pillars include:

College- and Career-Ready:

- One of the first two States to adopt college- and career-ready curriculum (Smart Core) requiring Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II and a fourth, higher level mathematics course.
- ~~Developed rigorous English and mathematics standards meeting American Diploma Project/Achieve “college- and career-ready” level of rigor.~~
- One of the first States to sign on to the State-led, voluntary Common Core initiative.
- One of the first 13 States to join the American Diploma Network’s Algebra II consortium and was actively involved in the development of the Algebra II exam and securing the contract with Pearson. Arkansas was one of 15 States to administer the exam last spring and report the results this fall.
- Requires that all public high schools *teach* a minimum set of 38 courses so that high school students would have access to the same course structure no matter which school they attended.
- Requires all new teachers to be mentored through the Pathwise© Induction program, which is a large factor in Arkansas’s lower than average recidivism rates.
- Requires all public high schools to offer, at the minimum, an AP course in each of the four core subject areas: mathematics, English, social studies and science. In addition, the State won a \$13.2 million grant from the National Math and Science Initiative to strengthen AP participation and scores in up to 30 high schools over a six-year period.
- Implemented high-stakes testing to begin 2009-2010 school year with Algebra I; a tenth-grade End of Course literacy exam will be added as a high-stakes test in 2014.
- Legislative Taskforce on Remediation, Retention and Graduation Rates set a goal to increase the number of Arkansas citizens with a bachelor’s degree from 18.2 percent to 27 percent (the SREB average) and set in place several objectives to help the State meet that goal.
- Created the Arkansas Challenge Scholarship and the Arkansas Scholarship Lottery act, which makes college scholarships available to all Arkansas residents regardless of race, gender, family income or course of study. Both scholarships promote academic rigor and require the completion for Smart Core to apply for funds. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-85-101 et. seq.).
- Implemented the Arkansas Career Pathway Initiative (collaboration between the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Workforce Education, Workforce Services and two-year colleges). The Career Pathway Initiative coordinates education and training programs and support services that enable adults to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector and allows the student to advance over time to successfully higher levels of education and employment in that sector 7,147 awards have been earned since 2005.

- Implemented the Career Readiness Certificate, which is a portable credential based on the WorkKeys assessment that demonstrates to Arkansas employers that an individual possesses the basic workplace skills required for 21st century jobs. 9,710 certificates have been awarded since 2008.
- Held the first Arkansas Works Summit in 2008 to bring together over 1500 education, economic development and business leaders to join forces to improve educational attainment.
- ~~Launched an expansion of the Arkansas College and Career Planning System. This system is a statewide initiative that will equip students and adults with the education and skills required for the opportunities that will await them.~~
- Launched the Arkansas Works Career Coach Initiative. Coaches will be placed in various high schools around the State to encourage students to aspire to post-secondary education, workforce training and/or apprenticeships as the means to a career that will afford economic self-sufficiency.
- Enacted several pieces of legislation to help prepare students for college:
 - Voluntary Universal ACT is an assessment program to provide an opportunity for all students in grade eleven to take part in the ACT. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-1601 et. seq.)
 - Provides parents access to public school data and school plan to close the achievement gap. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-2202)
 - Created the Arkansas College and Career Readiness Planning Program. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-441)
 - Created the Arkansas Project Graduation Commission. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-501 et. seq.).
- STEM Centers – Twelve universities have committed funding and housing for STEM Centers. State Professional Development funds grant one mathematics specialist and one science specialist position per center to provide quality professional development , coaching and on-site technical support to schools.

Data Quality

- In 2005, Arkansas received a \$3.3 million grant from USDOE to continue work on its longitudinal education data system. At that time, Arkansas's data system possessed seven of the ten essential qualities recommended by USDOE and the Data Quality Campaign for a longitudinal data system.
- In 2008, Arkansas was recognized by the Data Quality Campaign as one of the first four States to implement all 10 essential elements for a quality longitudinal education data system.
- In 2008 and 2009, ADE signed memorandums of understanding with the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the Arkansas Department of Career Education to link data systems and expand the longitudinal capabilities of our data system.

- In 2009, Arkansas's Workforce Cabinet agreed and is building the system now to link even more data to form an education to workforce longitudinal data system.

Effective Teachers and Equitable Distribution:

- Smart Start, Smart Step and Smart Future – professional development and resources to help teachers prepare students to perform at grade level in mathematics, science and literacy so they graduate college- and career-ready.
- Set a minimum teacher salary schedule that all local education agencies must meet or surpass. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-2403)
- Offers an alternative licensing plan, which is a two-year path offered by the State for individuals leaving other professions to begin work in the classroom while taking classes to gain pedagogical skills. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-409)
- Requires a maximum three-year plan for teachers who are teaching out of area to follow to obtain proper credentials for the courses they are teaching. These are developed with the school-level administrator and monitored by the administrator and ADE to ensure teachers are effective. (Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Addition of Areas of Licensure or Endorsement)
- Requires 60 hours of professional development for educators each year or 300 every five years for licensure renewal. (Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Professional Development and Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts)
- Provides approximately \$4 million to support on-line professional development via an online professional development portal (Arkansas IDEAS, a partnership with Arkansas Educational Television Network)
- State-funded Advanced Placement training for AP teachers at all high schools (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-16-1201 et. seq.)
- Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-2601 et. seq. created a pilot program, Rewarding Excellence in Achievement Program. The program was created to recognize excellent teachers through an alternative pay plan.
- Ark. Code Ann. § 6-26-101 et. seq. created the Arkansas Teacher Housing Development Foundation (ATHDF) to provide affordable housing and housing incentives to attract high-performing teachers to high-priority school districts. In addition, the Foundation offers additional housing assistance and special incentives to qualified teachers who serve or are willing to serve in high-priority school districts.
- Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-1601 created the Master Principal Program. The program is a voluntary three-phase program (approximately three years) that will provide bonuses to practicing principals achieving Master Principal status. The program is administered by the University of Arkansas's Arkansas Leadership Academy, which is funded by ADE. The Master Principal

Program rules allow the distribution of bonuses to principals that have successfully completed the program requirements.

- Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-811 created monetary incentives to recruit and retain high-performing teachers to high-priority districts. In order to receive the monetary incentives, an individual must be licensed, complete the entire current school year teaching in a high-priority district and complete his or her contracted teaching obligations.
- Nationally recognized leadership programs: The Arkansas Leadership Academy (ALA) and the Arkansas Center for Executive Leadership (ACEL)

Supports and Interventions:

- Arkansas Better Chance Program (Ark. Code Ann. 6-45-101 et. seq.), which serves over 25,000 three and four year olds in the State, has been recognized by the National Institute of Early Education Research and has ranked Arkansas as follows in the State of Pre-K 2008 Yearbook:
 - 2nd in the nation for access to 3 year olds
 - 14th in the nation for access to 4 year olds
 - 9 out of 10 quality benchmarks.
- Statewide use of America's Choice, a turnaround model, for schools in School Improvement Year 3 and beyond. This began with a \$6.2 million investment in 2006 and continues today as part of the State's Smart Accountability plan.
- Smart Accountability is the State's differentiated accountability plan approved by USDOE in January 2009 that is being put into effect this school year (2009-2010). Through Smart Accountability, the State works with district and school leaders to implement the appropriate systematic or targeted interventions to improve student achievement.
- "NSLA" categorical funding: this is additional State funding provided to school districts in direct relation to the percentage of free- and reduced-lunch students enrolled at the school to address the academic needs of lower socio-economic students. Schools must use this money on interventions that impact the learning opportunities for those students. This funding was created in the Second Extraordinary Session of the 2003 Arkansas General Assembly. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-2305)
- English Language Learners (ELL) categorical funding: This is additional funding provided to school districts on a per capita basis for ELL students. Schools must use this money on interventions that impact the learning opportunities for those students. This funding was created in the Second Extraordinary Session of the 2003 Arkansas General Assembly. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-2305)
- Alternative Learning Education (ALE) categorical funding: This is additional funding provided to school districts on a per capita basis for ALE students. School districts must use this money on interventions that impact the learning opportunities for those students. This funding was created in the Second Extraordinary Session of the 2003 Arkansas General Assembly. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-2305)

- Required remediation for all students in grades three through eight who do not score proficient or advanced on the State Literacy or Mathematics Benchmarks Examination. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-433)
- A strong Coordinated School Health program operating in 33 school districts. The goal of this model, which involves other community organizations, is to address the learning needs of the whole child.
- ~~Ark. Code Ann. § 6-1-501 et. seq. created the Arkansas Project Graduation Commission, which is mandated to research early warning systems.~~
- Committed Educational Service Cooperative in 15 regions of the State that provide ongoing professional development, technology assistance, curriculum development and alignment, and many other critical support and expertise.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds for LEAs

Local Education Agencies (including school districts, education cooperatives, and open-enrollment public charter schools) around Arkansas have also started to invest their share of over \$500 million dollars in formula funds dedicated to the State through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). These funds come from four different sources:

State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (Arkansas's Allocation – K12 Education (as of January 10, 2010): \$341,091,157) – The availability of these funds allows for LEAs to ensure that their students have the most conducive learning environments. Many LEAs in the State are using these funds for technology improvements, as well as construction, modernization, renovation and repairs to their facilities. By using these one-time funds for this purpose, the LEAs can now use their local funds for long term investments in instructional strategies. The combination of these will lead to long-term benefits for our students and teachers.

IDEA (Arkansas's Allocation: \$112,177,929.00) & IDEA Preschool (Arkansas's Allocation: \$5,565,646.00) - IDEA has long been under-funded in relation to the mandates required in the law. The increase in funding due to ARRA will allow Arkansas's districts to provide greater quality in their work to provide the best learning environment for students with disabilities.

Title I – Education for Disadvantaged Students (Arkansas's Allocation – \$111,143, 080) - The additional Title I funds provided through ARRA will allow more students in poverty to be served through this program. Currently, districts are required to prioritize the needs in their schools and

therefore not all schools that are eligible are able to receive services through the Title I program. For at least for two years, many of the students in Arkansas that normally would not receive these services will now are able to benefit.

LEAs have also had a few competitive grant sources available to them:

Enhancing Education through Technology (EETT) (Arkansas's Allocation \$7,125,783) - These grants will allow educators to provide students with the resources and instruction needed to help them become technologically literate by the end of eighth grade. It will also provide necessary professional development to teachers in order to provide this instruction. Twenty-eight districts in Arkansas have received this grant.

Child Nutrition Equipment Assistance Grants (Arkansas's Allocation \$1,249,361) - Many of the schools in Arkansas have school lunch equipment that is over 20 years old. It is also uncommon for schools to have equipment specifically for the benefit of serving healthy meals. However, this is the wish of many in our schools. We know when we have a healthy child; we have a student much more likely to be able to learn. One hundred and six schools in Arkansas will have new kitchen equipment as a result of this funding.

Education for Homeless Children and Youth Grants (Title VII-B) (Arkansas's Allocation \$644,533) - In Arkansas, these grants will be used for professional development as well as any supplies needed for program development to enable districts to better identify and serve homeless students. Local liaisons and district staff will be trained about homeless education issues and requirements. Fourteen school districts in Arkansas will receive part of this grant award.

(A)(3)(ii)(a-c) Improve student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since at least 2003, and explain the connections between the data and the actions that have contributed to increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA; decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA; and increasing high school graduation rates.

Arkansas's systematic approach to increasing student achievement this last decade has steered both legislative reform efforts and academic initiatives put in place by the ADE. Those steps, many of which are listed above under the four pillar areas, resulted largely from Act 35 of the 2003 Second Extraordinary Session and the "Omnibus Act" of 2003 of the General Assembly. Those two pieces of

legislation operate together to offer supports to schools as they work to meet the needs of students and subgroups of students as well as institute means of holding schools accountable for using the influx of resources effectively.

To support schools and school districts in a cohesive, systemic manner, the ADE developed its Smart Arkansas initiative, which comprises a number of “Smart” components that work together to form a strong academic culture for educators and students. Smart Start (grades K-4), Smart Step (grades 5-8) and Smart Future (grades 9-12) provide professional development and resources for teachers in the associate grade levels. These include rigorous academic standards and student learning expectations developed for each grade level and, for secondary grades, each subject area. In the areas of literacy, mathematics and science, these aligned standards are accompanied by rigorous assessments.

A longitudinal data system that follows each student from grade to grade and from school to school helps teachers better individualize instruction to ensure students perform at least on grade level. Other Smart Arkansas components include Smart Leadership, which is an initiative to train principals to become instructional leaders first and building managers second, and Smart Accountability, which is Arkansas’s differentiated accountability model. Smart Accountability will allow the State to intervene more directly in chronically under-performing schools as well as provide more guidance and support targeted to schools, and students within those schools, who need it most.

On the accountability side of the equation, the Omnibus legislation granted the State the right to intervene when local education agencies fail to meet academic, financial, or accreditation standards. The actions the State may take range from issuing warnings to taking over a school district. Since the law was enacted, the State has taken over six school districts for financial woes and one for facility issues. It has provided technical assistance to many others to enable them to turn around troubling situations under all four areas of the law.

As these efforts, and indeed the beginning of a new culture that believes in the worth of education, have taken hold in classrooms and school buildings across the State, Arkansas has witnessed an amazing improvement in performance indicators.

Arkansas students have exhibited continued growth on the State’s benchmark exams administered for ESEA purposes as well as marked improvement on NAEP exams over the past 10 years (*see Appendix A-4*). In 2009, more than 60 percent of students scored at the proficient level in every grade

on both the mathematics and literacy end of course tests. Arkansas standards are well-aligned with NAEP and the State was identified in 2007 as one of the top ten States in terms of rigor when compared with NAEP performance/trend lines in a study by USDOE. In 2005, ADE raised the cut score for proficiency on the fourth grade literacy examination to increase the test's rigor. A comparison of the percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced on the State's benchmark scores from 2005 to 2009 shows dramatic improvement in achievement:

	Math		Literacy	
	2005	2009	2005	2009
	58	81	50	67
	50	78	51	70
	41	70	47	68
	43	79	57	67
	43	68	50	63
	33	61	57	71

Arkansas was one of the first seven States to receive approval for a growth model that allowed schools that did not achieve AYP under the status model to be credited for making AYP if enough of their students exhibited adequate growth on their benchmark exam performance from the previous year that would allow them to reach proficiency within four years. In 2007, 69 schools made AYP as a result of individual students' academic growth. In 2008, 53 schools achieved AYP because of the growth model and in 2009, 53 schools did.

Arkansas also has a Gains Model created by the legislature through Act 35 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003 that places schools into one of five categories based on a comparison of performance of individual students from one grade to the next. State funding totaling \$5 million will be used to distribute financial incentive awards, with 80 percent for gains and 20 percent for excellence to schools.

Arkansas's students' scores on the National Assessment for Educational progress have climbed dramatically over the past decade for most of the tested subject grades, putting Arkansas at or near the national average for public school students for the first time in the State's history (see *Appendix A-5*). In addition, the rate of improvement has garnered recognition for the State from national organizations including Education Trust and the Center for Education Policy. Some highlights include:

- Fourth grade math: In 2008, the average score was 238 while in 2000 it was 216.
- Fourth grade reading: In 2007, the average score was 217 while in 1998 it was 209.
- Eighth grade math: In 2009, the average score was 276 while in 2000 it was 257.
- Eighth grade reading: In 2007, the average score was 259 while in 1998 it was 256.
- Eighth grade writing: In 2008, the average score was 151, while in 1998 it was 137

Another set of tests in which Arkansas students have excelled are Advanced Placement exams. The State of Arkansas put into legislations as part of its 2003 legislatively driven education reform requirements for all public high schools to offer at least four AP classes, one in each of the core subject areas of mathematics, English, social studies and science. The State also appropriated funding to pay for the AP exams for all students enrolled in those courses. Due to those actions, Arkansas set AP's 50-year history in 2005 with a 108 percent increase in participation rates over 2004 participation. Since that time, participation and the percent of students scoring a 3, 4 or 5 on the exam have continued to climb. *(See Appendix A-6)*

In 2007, Arkansas's students' scores on the State Benchmark Examination offered a positive reward: because of the hard work of teachers and students, for the first time, signs of a narrowing achievement gap could be detected between the scores of that year and the previous year. The same trends – and an overall continued narrowing – revealed themselves with the 2008 and 2009 test score results. (An exception occurred with the 2008 gap between white and Hispanic students, likely the result of the federal mandate to eliminate portfolios and include non-English speaking students on the Benchmark exams after a year in U.S. schools.)

While the achievement gap did not narrow nearly as dramatically or consistently with NAEP scores, some narrowing did occur while scores for all groups increased with the exception of Hispanic reading scores at both grade levels. A case in point is the 4th grade mathematics NAEP exam. From the 2003 to the 2009 administration of NAEP, the achievement gap between whites and blacks narrowed by two points, from a gap of 36 points in 2003 to a gap of 34 points in 2009. Meanwhile, white students' scores

For years, Arkansas has been able to boast a graduation rate above the national average and therefore the State has focused more of its efforts on adding rigor to the high school curriculum to make the

high school diploma more meaningful and to graduate students who are indeed college and career ready. Even so, until the State graduates 100 percent of its students from high school, it is committed to being transparent about its high school graduation rate and to enact measures and policies that will increase the number of students who graduate high school on time. To that end, the State:

- One of the first States to adopt the National Governors Association's high school graduation rate.
- Applied for and received a grant from America's Promise to stage a series of workshops in 2008 and 2009 with districts having the lowest graduation rates.
- Stipulated in legislation offering incentives for increased percentage of students graduating with Arkansas's college- and career-ready Smart Core curriculum that the graduation rate not decrease.
- Initiated a study with Johns Hopkins University to determine factors associated with dropouts in Arkansas in order to begin work on a dropout early warning system.
- Implemented High Schools that Work, which has increased graduation rates.

With the focus of these programs, along with the State's Smart Accountability and Statewide System of Support, Arkansas has shown that it can be a leader in adopting the policies and processes necessary to lower the dropout rate, decrease the achievement gap and increase academic achievement for all Arkansas students.

(B) Standards and Assessments (70 total points)

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards (40 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to adopting a common set of high-quality standards, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B)—

(i) The State's participation in a consortium of States that— (20 points)

(a) Is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) that are supported by evidence that they are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation; and

(b) Includes a significant number of States; and

(ii) — (20 points)

(a) For Phase 1 applications, the State's high-quality plan demonstrating its commitment to and progress toward adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State, and to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way; or

(b) For Phase 2 applications, the State's adoption of a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State in a high-quality plan toward which the State has made significant progress, and its commitment to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way.¹

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (B)(1)(i):

- A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement, executed by the State, showing that it is part of a standards consortium.

¹ Phase 2 applicants addressing selection criterion (B)(1)(ii) may amend their June 1, 2010 application submission through August 2, 2010 by submitting evidence of adopting common standards after June 1, 2010.

- A copy of the final standards or, if the standards are not yet final, a copy of the draft standards and anticipated date for completing the standards.
- Documentation that the standards are or will be internationally benchmarked and that, when well-implemented, will help to ensure that students are prepared for college and careers.
- The number of States participating in the standards consortium and the list of these States.

Evidence for (B)(1)(ii):

For Phase 1 applicants:

- A description of the legal process in the State for adopting standards, and the State's plan, current progress, and timeframe for adoption.

For Phase 2 applicants:

- Evidence that the State has adopted the standards. Or, if the State has not yet adopted the standards, a description of the legal process in the State for adopting standards and the State's plan, current progress, and timeframe for adoption.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) is an active partner in the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) as evidenced by the attached signed Memorandum of Agreement. (*See Appendix B-1*) The State is one of 48 States, 2 territories and the District of Columbia committed to developing a common core of State standards, beginning with English-language arts and mathematics for grades K-12. These States and territories include:

Alabama; Arizona; Arkansas; California; Colorado; Connecticut; Delaware; District of Columbia; Florida; Georgia; Hawaii; Idaho; Illinois; Indiana; Iowa; Kansas; Kentucky; Louisiana; Maine; Maryland; Massachusetts; Michigan; Minnesota; Mississippi; Missouri; Montana; Nebraska; Nevada; New Hampshire; New Jersey; New Mexico; New York; North Carolina; North Dakota; Ohio; Oklahoma; Oregon; Pennsylvania; Puerto Rico; Rhode Island; South Carolina; South Dakota; Tennessee; Utah; Vermont; Virgin Islands; Virginia; Washington; West Virginia; Wisconsin; Wyoming.

Dr. Ken James, former Arkansas Commissioner of Education, served as Chair of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) during the initial stages of the State-led process of developing and adopting common core State standards. Under his leadership, Arkansas was an early adopter and continues to be actively involved in all aspects of the Standards Initiative.

Since his appointment as Commissioner of Education, Dr. Tom Kimbrell continues the State's commitment to adopt and fully implement the Common Core Standards (CCS) by participating in all convenings and conversations associated with the Standards Initiative. In addition, the Arkansas

State Board of Education (SBE), through participation in the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), has demonstrated its support of Arkansas's commitment to the Common Core Standards Initiative. Ms. Alice Mahony, SBE member, has represented the State on a variety of CCSSO/NASBE committees working with the Common Core Standards Initiative. The State was also chosen by Achieve, Inc. and approved by the partners of the Common Core Standards Initiative to be represented on the Common Core Standards Initiative K-12 Standards Development Teams.

ADE Mathematics Specialists Tommy Coy and ADE Language Arts Specialists Dana Breitweiser are filling those roles.

The Common Core Standards define the knowledge and skills students should have to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing, academic college courses and in the workforce training programs. The standards have been internationally benchmarked to ensure that America will have the workers whose knowledge, skills, and talents are competitive with the best in the world. *Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education*, a report by the National Governor's Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers and Achieve, Inc., helped States that were developing the Common Core Standards take the next steps toward ensuring that American students receive a world-class education that positions them to compete and innovate in the 21st century.

Upon release of the Common Core Standards (see draft standards in *Appendix B-2*), Arkansas is positioned to adopt the standards through existing policy and procedures as defined in the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program (ACTAAP). (Arkansas Department of Education Emergency Rules Governing the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program and the Academic Distress Program) Please see *Appendix B-3* for the ACTTAP Rule.

The State has postponed the revision of the current English Language-Arts frameworks in anticipation of the release of the Common Core Standards and will escalate revisions of the mathematics frameworks. This will enable the Arkansas State Board of Education to formally consider adopting the Common Core Standards by August 2010. (See timeline in B(3))

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (10 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B) the State's participation in a consortium of States that—

- (i) Is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice); and
- (ii) Includes a significant number of States.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (B)(2):

- A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement, executed by the State, showing that it is part of a consortium that intends to develop high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards; or documentation that the State's consortium has applied, or intends to apply, for a grant through the separate Race to the Top Assessment Program (to be described in a subsequent notice); or other evidence of the State's plan to develop and adopt common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice).
- The number of States participating in the assessment consortium and the list of these States.

Recommended maximum response length: One page

The State of Arkansas has joined the Balanced Assessments of Common Core Standards Consortium which includes over 36 States (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Washington DC, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming).

The Balanced Assessment Consortium work will be grounded in the following principles:

- 1) Assessments are grounded in a thoughtful, standards-based curriculum and are managed as part of a tightly integrated system of standards, curriculum, assessment, instruction, and teacher development.
- 2) Assessments elicit evidence of actual student performance on challenging tasks that prepare students for the demands of college and career in the 21st century.
- 3) Teachers are involved in the development of curriculum and the development and scoring of assessments.
- 4) Assessments are structured to continuously improve teaching and learning.
- 5) Assessment and accountability systems are designed to improve the quality of learning and schooling.
- 6) Assessment and accountability systems use multiple measures to evaluate students and schools.
- 7) New technologies enable greater assessment quality and information systems that support accountability.

Each of the working principles of this consortium is defined in the attached MOU (*See Appendix B-4*), including the roles and responsibilities of the consortium, the State educational agency, the school district and the schools. The State of Arkansas will participate as a full member of the Balanced Assessment Consortium and also has a plan to transition all public school districts including public charter schools to the new Common Core Standards and Assessment system when the time comes.

As an American Diploma Project (ADP) member, the State is also in conversations with Achieve, the National Governor's Association, and the Council of Chief State School Officers regarding joining a consortium focused on the development of a common summative assessment. Achieve's confirmation letter for Arkansas's commitment is attached. Currently, 27 State's have Stated their commitment to the Achieve consortium. (*See Appendix B-5*).

Both consortiums are committed to building a high quality, rigorous and internationally benchmarked assessments system aligned to the Common Core Standards.

Reform Plan Criteria

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments (20 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan for supporting a statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation, and high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) tied to those standards. State or LEA activities might, for example, include: developing a rollout plan for the standards together with all of their supporting components; in cooperation with the State's institutions of higher education, aligning high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements with the new standards and assessments; developing or acquiring, disseminating, and implementing high-quality instructional materials and assessments (including, for example, formative and interim assessments (both as defined in this notice)); developing or acquiring and delivering high-quality professional development to support the transition to new standards and assessments; and engaging in other strategies that translate the standards and information from assessments into classroom practice for all students, including high-need students (as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Eight pages

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments

In 1998, the Arkansas Department of Education launched the Smart Initiative representing a comprehensive plan for student achievement, focused on strong accountability with an emphasis on well defined, high educational standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics and assessments aligned to those standards. Professional Development supporting the Smart Initiative focused on both teacher and administrators, promoting the mission of the Initiative and emphasized topics related to subject matter content, curriculum alignment, assessment forms and use, data decision making, and incorporating a variety of instructional strategies and techniques. Through a systematic, sequenced set of statewide professional development activities, the Arkansas Department of Education provided all districts and schools an opportunity to learn from and with the nation's leading standards, curriculum and assessment experts. ADE will build on successful strategies used in the past for capacity building and change.

In January of 2007, the Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative (NWA Co-op) and the 16 member districts, in collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) came together to develop a common curriculum and pacing guide that was grounded in the theory and practice of the Smart Initiative. The common curriculum would provide more equitable curriculum access for economically disadvantaged and highly mobile students. Lisa Carter, a noted leader and consultant in instructional alignment and lead consultant with the Smart Initiative, facilitated the process of Total Instructional Alignment (TIA) for the clarification, horizontal and vertical alignment of the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks in K-12 English-language arts and mathematics.

One hundred twenty-four schools in the region participated in the alignment process and were represented by 168 teachers and academic coaches. The initial alignment work occurred over three days; literacy and math specialists from the 16 districts and ADE then used online collaborative tools to refine the work. The process resulted in curriculum guides for K-12 English-language arts and mathematics that teachers throughout Northwest Arkansas use to plan and deliver consistent standards-based curriculum to their students. By 2008 the State network of 15 Education Service Cooperatives had adopted the TIA curriculum guides and initiated the systematic implementation across the State.

The TIA process includes annual revisions based on student achievement data and feedback from teachers throughout the State. Participation in the ongoing TIA process continues to build the capacity of teachers to plan and deliver standards-based instruction and of principals and central office personnel to lead and support curriculum work throughout the State. It has become a true job-embedded model of professional development. The Total Instructional Alignment process has been used for standards clarification and curriculum alignment in other content areas including social studies, science, and career and technical education.

Because of this strong foundational curriculum work across the State, the educators of Arkansas are well-positioned and eager to adopt the Common Core State Standards and use the TIA collaborative processes to transition the Common Core Standards into clear curriculum guides that can be used to plan and deliver consistent, rigorous daily instruction to all of the students across the State of Arkansas.

Not only has the State in partnership with the Educational Cooperatives developed and implemented the TIA process, it has also worked toward developing a coherent standards based assessment system

including not only summative assessments, but also interim and formative measures. As a member of the CCSSO Multi-State Consortium on Formative Assessment, ADE has access to national and international researchers and leaders in formative and interim assessments. As previously mentioned, the Smart Initiative professional development, has afforded AR educators opportunities to work with a network of assessment experts. Many school districts have adopted interim assessments based on the State standards. These interim assessments are developed through a collaborative partnership with the Cooperatives and designed by a team of content and assessment consultants. To advance the use of formative measures, in 2008, ADE, in collaboration with Margaret Heritage, a consultant to the formative Consortium, piloted a program of professional development with two Cooperatives, designed to increase the effective use of school-based data for improved student learning. In addition to the use of summative and interim test data, a core element of the professional development included the effective use of formative assessment in the classroom to guide day-to-day instruction.

Race to the Top would enable ADE to develop curriculum aligned to the Common Core Standards and fully develop a comprehensive and coherent assessment system which includes formative, interim and summative methods and measures.

Transition Goals

1. To provide a seamless transition from the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks to the Common Core State Standards and the Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks beginning with K-12 English language arts and mathematics.
2. To provide a high-quality, technology-enabled curriculum guide for each grade level/course in K-12 English-language arts and mathematics that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and the Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks and includes:
 - Clarification of each standard by grade level and learning expectation through clear objectives, task analyses, required vocabulary and prerequisite skills, sample assessment items, and supporting resources*
 - Lesson plans and assessment items for each of the core standards would be added within two years
 - Vertical alignment from grade-to-grade and course-to-course, including alignment to those college freshman-level courses in which our high school graduates are least successful

* Format may be modified depending on Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks

3. To provide a comprehensive and coherent assessment system (formative, interim, summative) as part of the TIA process

4. To implement high-quality professional learning focused on examination of student work, curriculum and assessment development, and moderated scoring.
5. To partner with post secondary institutions in the TIA process.

Activity 1

A Program Director and staff will be hired to implement and oversee the following work:

- Initiate the Total Instructional Alignment (TIA) process for comparing and revising the current TIA curriculum guides and other relevant curriculum materials as they align to the Common Core Standards and the Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks to determine areas of congruence and difference.
- Using the TIA process, development of fully-aligned curriculum guides that include model units, model lessons, and recommendations for formative assessments, including videos of best practice teaching
- Integrate Common Core Standards and Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks into existing curriculum guides, resources, model lessons, assessments, and student learning data into the Instructional Improvement System

Activity 2

Partner with Margaret Heritage to take to scale the above referenced pilot assessment professional development program:

- Integrate the formative assessment into the TIA process including curriculum guides and lesson plans
- Integrate the tenants of the pilot assessment professional development program into Activity 1 and 3
- Provide on line programs for use by school teams and cooperatives including virtual opportunities for sharing effective practices in the Instructional Improvement System (described in Section D)
- Summer institutes focused on the purposes and uses of formative, interim and summative assessments
- Guidance for implementing a complete assessment system

Activity 3

A Request for Proposal will be issued for the development of professional training modules and all associated materials, including technology-based. Training modules will include, but not be limited to, Common Core Standards, frameworks, curriculum materials and assessment concepts and skills. Modules shall be developed as a trainer of training package for supervisors of professional learning

including superintendents, central office staff, and cooperatives; supervisors at the school site who will support collaborative professional learning teams including principals and assistant principals; teacher leaders and school administrators who will facilitate team learning at their schools or in their districts; and, teachers who will participate in collaborative professional learning teams to create professional development modules for the purposes of providing training to all districts/schools on the CCS and TIA including curriculum guides and model lessons. There will be six facilitated sessions for each target audience over a four year period. This will provide enough funding for the trainer to train all of the math and ELA teachers in Arkansas by the end of Year Four. This amount funds the provision of the training; however, the participation in the training by the teachers will be borne by the LEAs.

Timelines (Timeline given are the best estimate based on the decisions of the Balanced Assessment Consortium)

- April 2010 - Common Core Standards presented to State Board of Education including development and implementation plan
- April 2010 - Initiate partnership with Margaret Heritage to take to scale the pilot Assessment Professional Development program
- May 2010 - Committee of Practitioners will be formed for the purpose of advising the ADE on Race to the Top work and on Balanced Assessment Consortium work
- May 2010 - Pursuant to State laws, initiate the procurement process for necessary goods and services needed to carry out the adoption and implementation of the Common Core Standards including but not limited to review of the CCS; development of the TIA aligned to the CCS; development of a professional development plan, materials and training support for implementing the CCS and TIA
- August 2010 - State Board of Education considers CCS for adoption
- September 2010 - September 2012 development of first edition curriculum guides including model lesson plans, resources and assessments for implementing Common Core Language Arts/Mathematics Standards
- January 2011 - Ongoing professional development training opportunities for understanding CCS and TIA
- June 2011 - Ongoing Trainer of Trainer CCS/TIA professional development
- August 2011 - Ongoing District/School CCS/TIA professional development

Responsible Parties (As listed below and/or as contained in the Balanced Assessment Consortium MOU)

- **Arkansas Department of Education (ADE)**

- A Program Director and two staff members will be hired to oversee the Common Core Standards implementation plan; a person whose sole responsibility is to work with ADE and Teacher Center Coordinators (TCC) from the Education Service Cooperatives to provide the service and support that schools will need to successfully execute the implementation plan

- **Criteria:**

- Leadership experience
- Demonstrated knowledge regarding curriculum and instruction
- Leader of curriculum work at the district, Co-op or State level
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience in the planning and delivery of research-based professional development

- Provide resources and support

- **Education Service Cooperatives (15)**

- Serve as the communication conduit to districts
- Establish and maintain a network of practitioners who would develop a set of criteria for assessing operationalization of the Common Core Standards with rubrics defining quality implementation and standards for all documents that would be shared across the State
- Align resources to support implementation of Common Core Standards and Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks
- Collaboratively develop common professional development opportunities which will support fidelity in the implementation of Common Core Standards and Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks
- Convene superintendents, curriculum leaders, and principals from the districts twice yearly to review progress of the schools and share best practices
- Work with districts to develop a compelling parent component and materials for home support of the rigorous Common Core Standards and Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks

- **Districts**

- Reallocate resources of time and money to support the implementation of Common Core Standards and Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks
- Align the work of all departments and staff to the learning needs of students
- Evaluate all programs as to their contribution to student learning; eliminate those ~~programs and practices that bring little or no value to student learning~~
- Model best practices in collaboration at all district meetings
- Provide the service and support that will be required for teachers to implement the Common Core Standards and Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks and assessments
- Provide compelling parent involvement component and materials for support of students learning the rigorous Common Core Standards
- Adopt an interim assessment system that includes the following characteristics (included in the district's Race to the Top application)
 - Qualitative insights about understandings and misconceptions and not just a numeric score.
 - Immediate implications for what to do besides re-teaching every missed item.
 - Rich representation of the content standards students are expected to master.
 - The assessment includes high quality test items that are directly linked to the content standards and specific teaching units.
 - Good fit within the curriculum so that the test is an extension of the learning rather than a time-out from learning.
 - Good fit with curriculum pacing so that students are not tested on content not yet taught.
 - Clear reporting that provides actionable guidance on how to use the results.
 - Validation of the uses of and information provided by the assessment.
 - Administration features (speed, availability of normative information, customization, timing flexibility; adaptive) that match the assessment purposes.
 - Professional development opportunities for teachers to learn how to affectively use interim assessments in their classroom.

- **Principals**

- Conduct classroom walk-throughs to monitor the implementation of Common Core Standards and Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks to identify best practices and to determine appropriate coaching and professional development
- Provide coaching and support for teachers in the implementation of Common Core Standards and Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks
- Provide time for teachers to collaborate
- Participate in professional development with teachers; model best instructional practices in all meetings

- **Teachers**

- Use the Common Core Standards, Consortium-developed Curriculum Frameworks, and model units and lessons revised through the TIA process to design and deliver instruction
- Use formative assessment data to adjust and personalize daily instruction
- Develop appropriate interventions based on assessment data
- Use interim assessment data as a basis for self-reflection and recommendations for curriculum revisions and/or personal professional development.

End of SY 2013- 2014 End of SY 2012- 2013 End of SY 2011- 2010 End of SY 2010- 2011 Actual Data: Baseline (Current)	End of SY 2013- 2014	End of SY 2012- 2013	End of SY 2011- 2010	End of SY 2010- 2011	Actual Data: Baseline (Current)
Performance Measures Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.					

(C) Data Systems to Support Instruction (47 total points)

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system (24 points – 2 points per America COMPETES element)

The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice).

In the text box below, the State shall describe which elements of the America COMPETES Act (as defined in this notice) are currently included in its statewide longitudinal data system.

Evidence:

- Documentation for each of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice) that is included in the State's statewide longitudinal data system.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

Since 2005, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has made significant progress in its creation of a longitudinal data system (LDS) to efficiently and effectively manage, analyze, disaggregate and individually use student data to improve Arkansas's K-12 education system, consistent with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) Previously, Arkansas had based its reporting off disparate, district-level databases that supported the State and school districts' fiscal, and personnel State and federal reporting requirements. From an operational perspective, these systems were generally satisfactory, and data was adequate to meet reporting requirements, including those associated with No Child Left Behind. However, the value of the stored information was diminished by the considerable effort required to design and conduct cross system analyses. There was no capacity to exchange data with institutions of higher education. There were gaps between researchers' data needs and the data that was actually collected which limited capability to perform certain analyses. There was an inability to link to wage reporting information to track student outcomes once they enter the workforce.

To address these challenges, with assistance from the United States Department of Education (USDOE) Statewide Longitudinal Data System Grant (SLDS), ADE constructed a longitudinal data system to fill gaps in its current system and more effectively manage, analyze, disaggregate, and use individual student data to support decision making at the State, district, school, classroom and parent

levels, in order to eliminate achievement gaps and improve learning of all students. Building on the existing data systems, ADE established enterprise-wide data architecture and constructed a data warehouse that provided for integration of the State's fiscal, student and staff data.

Below, in relation to the America Competes Act data element requirements, Arkansas reports its progress towards building an enterprise-wide LDS to fulfill the State's data needs.

(1) A unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system;

The Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) was established in September 1992 for the purpose of implementing a statewide computer system linking all Arkansas public school systems and the ADE as required by Ark. Code Ann. § 6-11-128. Through APSCN and the ADE's electronic transcript vendor, Triand, unique student identifiers are created and linked to each student's record. The unique identifier allows data used for educational research and reporting purposes to be shared without transmitting personally identifiable information, such as social security numbers.

(2) Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information;

Through ADE's Statewide Information System (SIS), student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information is collected. SIS data is collected nine times per school year through what is known as "cycle submissions." SIS data elements are updated yearly and published online and in the SIS Manual. School districts are notified by March 30 of the upcoming school year of data element changes, deletions or additions.

(3) Student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs; (4) The capacity to communicate with higher education data systems;

Points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out or complete P-20 education programs are available within the State's data systems. K-12 data is currently available within the ADE longitudinal data system (LDS) and memorandum of understandings (MOU) (*Appendix C-1*) exist between the ADE, Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) and Arkansas's Pre-kindergarten program--the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program administered under the DHS's Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education--to facilitate sharing of P-20 data. Though

existing data linkages and research efforts are underway, additional development is planned to enhance and extend the State's ability to more easily conduct P-workforce longitudinal research.

(5) A State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability;

Arkansas law requires school districts to certify data submitted to the State through each of the nine SIS cycle submissions. In addition to each district superintendent's certification of accuracy, validity and quality, APSCN, in coordination with Arkansas Legislative Audit, regularly audits cycle data as it progresses from school district student and financial management systems into the longitudinal data system. ADE subscribes to the total data quality management (TDQM) approach for continually improving data quality by building data quality process into its data system, such as a Phase 0, 1 and 2 error checks on cycle submissions.

(6) Yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)); (7) Information on students not tested by grade and subject; (10) Student-level college readiness test scores;

The State's data systems collect standardized assessment records for a variety of assessments. The ACT® and End of Course Exams (EOCs) are two examples of standardized assessments recorded for students.

(8) A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students;

Though development to enhance and extend the value-add of the student/teacher link is underway, APSCN maintains a student/teacher link by mapping each student and teacher to a master course schedule within each school district's student management system. Though this linkage is currently developed, additional enhancements are planned to maximize utility of the linkage. The State's electronic transcript system, Triand, assigns unique identifiers to each certified public school teacher.

(9) Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned;

The ADE utilizes Triand, a Texas-based electronic transcript company, to deliver electronic transcript functionality for public school students. The electronic transcript is accessible at multiple levels within the school district, including the teacher-level, depending upon access rights deemed

appropriate by the school district. The electronic transcript contains student-level information, including courses completed and grades earned, among others.

(11) Information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and (12) Other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

Though additional development is planned to enhance and extend the ADE and ADHE data link, the ADE and ADHE have established an MOU that allows sharing and longitudinal research necessary to determine students' transition from secondary to postsecondary education and remediation required in postsecondary education. Additional activities as part of the agencies' participation in the College & Career Readiness Policy Institute (CCRPI) help extend efforts to ensure data systems can determine student readiness as they enter the workforce or postsecondary education past twelfth grade. The ADE in cooperation with ADHE also publishes a High School to College Success Report (*Appendix C-2*) each year that answers the question of "How well is your high school preparing students for success in Arkansas postsecondary institutions?" for each public high school in the State.

Reform Plan Criteria

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data (5 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan to ensure that data from the State's statewide longitudinal data system are accessible to, and used to inform and engage, as appropriate, key stakeholders (e.g., parents, students, teachers, principals, LEA leaders, community members, unions, researchers, and policymakers); and that the data support decision-makers in the continuous improvement of efforts in such areas as policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation, and overall effectiveness.²

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has established and continues to improve its Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), which as early as 2007 had already met all of the Data Quality Campaign's (DQC) 10 essential elements. ADE is aggressively pursuing a broad range of new initiatives with a primary focus on driving the effective utilization of its SLDS resources. ADE's objective is to engage the research community and build a strong culture of data-driven decision-making (DDDM) in the State that is enriched by sharing of data across the K-12, higher education, and workforce thresholds. Earlier this year, ADE executed its statewide site licensing agreement with IBM/Cognos. Initial versions of scorecards and dashboards built using the Cognos tools suite are now being deployed, as is an ADE open-source visual analytic and collaboration tool (Hive). Central to its drive to ensure the effective use of its data resources and tools, ADE recently completed the first phase of its strategic effort to engage institutional partners and educators throughout the State around a common and defined set of best practices, methods, and curriculum components necessary

² Successful applicants that receive Race to the Top grant awards will need to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including 34 CFR Part 99, as well as State and local requirements regarding privacy.

to achieving a culture of DDDM. Working with the Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center (AACC), National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) and the Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center (MC3), ADE developed a stepwise framework and protocol for educational data analysis and decision-making at the school and classroom level, and is now working with its Arkansas institutional partners to make this a central element in educational practice throughout the State. ADE's parallel efforts to strengthen the framework for data sharing across K-12 to workforce thresholds and other organizational boundaries have been reinforced by the establishment of a statewide multiagency data-sharing consortium established at the direction of Governor Beebe.

ADE is moving forward with many other SLDS initiatives including those related to interim testing and curriculum development, integration of teacher licensure, professional development, district-level system integration, researcher access, systems documentation, and training. In its December 2008 evaluation of the Arkansas SLDS effort, Metis Associates, ADE's SLDS evaluator, was able to document significant utilization and a very good level of satisfaction based on results of surveys administered to some 5,000 Arkansas teachers, principals and other educators. In addition, Metis showed schools that made the heaviest use of SLDS system resources experienced a discernable growth in achievement over schools that made less use of these resources. There is now a very strong indication that the work ADE is doing to develop the SLDS program is achieving results.

ADE has carefully reviewed the State of its SLDS implementation against the new standard established by the seven required capabilities and the 12 elements prescribed in the America COMPETES Act. This is essential to keeping Arkansas aligned to the best and emerging practices being used by its SEA peers and others across the country, as well as ensuring that the SLDS continues to meet broader goals for enabling educational change and student improvement. In its approach to interagency data sharing and national data standards adoption, Arkansas is also seeking to advance several bold, cutting-edge initiatives with the potential to greatly benefit Arkansas and advance the State of practice nationally.

Proposed Outcomes Related to System Requirements and Implementation Outcomes

Listed below are the proposed outcomes and timeline for each of the system requirements (both capabilities and elements) that Arkansas will be addressing in the near future. The 11 outcomes are organized under three broad categories. The staff of the ADE's Division of Research and

Technology will be responsible for completion of the outcomes and adherence to the established completion timeline.

I. Acceleration of Arkansas's DDDM and Policy Research Agendas and Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness

1. Arkansas Research Center (ARC): Strengthening ADE DDDM and Policy Research Initiatives and engaging researchers in more focused policy research using the SLDS.
2. Development of DDDM and Researcher Collaboration Portals by Establishment of web-based collaboration portals in support of ARC's work on DDDM and policy research. Establishment of user friendly dashboards and scorecards at school, district and state- levels to provide educational stakeholders timely (daily) access to high-quality educational data.
3. Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: Teacher-Student Link Establishment and utilization of teacher, student, and course linkages to support evaluation of teacher effectiveness. The establishment of an early warning data system to enable school and district-level access to valuable teacher effectiveness and student performance data, will assist in the development of a support structure to increase the number of students graduating from high school ready for college and careers.

II. Expansion and Enhancement of Cross-Agency Data Sharing

4. Establishment of the shared online data mart and development of comprehensive business use case definition process that defines cross agency needs for shared data and a cross-agency data governance process.
5. Establishment of a Trusted Broker unit (TrustEd) within the ARC with performance of entity resolution and integration of the operation of this facility into the consortium's data-sharing processes.
6. Arkansas Education to Employment Tracking and Trends Initiative (AEETT) Completion of the necessary research and development work and implementation of advanced technology solutions for AEETT interoperability, including data federation, SOA, and adoption of the NIEM exchange model for interagency data exchange.
7. Linking to Pre-K and Early Childhood Conclusion of data-sharing arrangement and establishment of a file exchange process with the ABC program with addition of the ABC file as a regular data feed to the SLDS and development of expanded data-sharing agreements to maximize the Pre-K population registered to SLDS.

III. Restructuring ADE's SLDS Technical and Data Architecture

8. Improving the technical architecture and data quality and reporting improvements by restructuring the current SLDS ETL and staging area environments and strengthen and creation of a new operational data store, and establishment of daily batch loads from ADE transactional systems.
9. Implementing technical architecture improvements including an eSchoolPLUS upgrade, SIF, and SOA Migration and upgrading the current Pentamotion district transactional systems to SunGard eSchoolPLUS.
10. Adoption and alignment implementation of a NEDM compliant database synchronized to the current SLDS production environments for use by researchers and data analysis and for TrustEd/AEETT interactions.
11. Establishment of a state-wide directory and authentication system, facilitating single sign on (explained below) of State information systems and easy access to commonly utilized educational resources.

Unified Resource Portal

Arkansas teachers and educational administrators have access to numerous information systems and professional development resources to improve instruction and render student achievement; however, resources are often underutilized due to difficulty in locating applications, complexities involved in accessing information systems with confidential student data and confusion regarding where to go for different types of information.

The Unified Resource Portal proposes to increase accessibility and drive adoption and usage of web-driven State and local resources by creating a consolidated platform from which educators may utilize information systems, professional development resources and Internet content.

A common request among State-, district-, and school- level educators is easier access to useful data. Teachers, for example, may look up a student's records on the State electronic transcript system, obtain classroom and student-level performance indicators by using a set of dashboards or scorecards within the business intelligence suite, administer a formative or summative test on their target testing system or enter daily grade and attendance data on their student management system. Though all useful and value-proven systems, educators often fail to maximize the utility of these resources.

The Unified Resource Portal aims to improve accessibility and usage of the following educational systems by developing a consolidated directory and authentication system from which the functionality of these disparate systems may be utilized:

- **Student and Financial Information Systems.** The Arkansas Public School Computer Network provides computing services software (financial and student) to school districts for use by school, district, and educational cooperative and State users. Financial and student systems provide software, support and training to school district personnel on the entry and usage of data through the data systems.
- **Business Intelligence Data Warehouse.** The business intelligence data warehouse is a longitudinal data system designed to allow PK-20 educators, researchers and policy makers the ability to perform data driven decision-making based off certified longitudinal data. Educators may use dashboard and scorecard-styled heads-up displays to continually monitor student performance and identify areas of high priority.
- **Electronic Transcript System.** The electronic transcript system allows teacher-level access to confidential student data for their current students. Outside of typical transcript data, educators may view prior schools attended by the student, up-to-date course histories and socio-economic information. Designed with collaboration functionality, the electronic transcript system introduces social networking for public education where educators can help other educators across the State. Users have the ability to view student records, State and local assessment results, course history, current schedule and more. Teachers may create lesson plans aligned to Arkansas standards, share lesson plans with others or search for lesson plans within the database.
- **Streaming video and content on demand.** Arkansas launched the development of a statewide system for the creation, distribution and use of educational media via a distributed podcasting system. Arkansas students, teachers, administrators, regional educational service cooperatives, State cultural and educational institutions, ADE staff and others are encouraged to create digital media for students, teachers, and the public to download and use in the classroom and beyond. This service taps the creativity and innovation of students and educators, promotes the value of digital media in learning, and makes learning accessible anytime and anywhere.
- **Data Visualization Systems.** Arkansas's leading edge interactive visualization application, Hive, incorporates social networking to allow educators and the public to collaborate in data analysis. At the public level, all data is anonymized but authorized users can view individual student data under a secure sign-on. A variety of visualizations are supported, including both

aggregated and student-level student growth percentiles. The system is extensible, and users continually suggest improvements.

- **Professional Development Portal.** The Arkansas Internet Delivered Education for Arkansas Schools (IDEAS) portal is provided by a joint initiative between the Arkansas Department of Education and Arkansas Educational Television Network. The IDEAS portal provides web-based professional development resources to Arkansas's teachers in an innovative online professional-development-portal. It's available to all certified Arkansas teachers at their convenience and free of charge. Though many resources are publicly available, licensing agreements require educators to access the system using a personally identifiable login.

Arkansas strives to continually enhance education through technology and empower educators with relevant, useful and creative tools in the classrooms; however, like many organizations, is faced with the ever increasing burden to control access to sensitive data while ensuring educators have quick and easy access to much needed data.

Much more than a technical project, a commonly requested platform to drive adoption and usage of State and local support systems is desired and genuinely needed in Arkansas. The Unified Resource Portal purposes development of a directory and authentication architecture that allows all levels of educators—in and out of the classroom—organized, efficient and easy access to a plethora of valuable information systems, professional development resources and web-driven content.

Partnership with the NORMES

It is important to note in this section that the National Office for Research, Measurement and Evaluation Systems (NORMES) data system was developed at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville in collaboration with ADE leadership in the late 1990s to support the required assessment efforts for federal programs data collection and reporting. Although the system operates independently from the ADE APSCN and LDS system, the systems have shared data through various means over the years to enhance the ability of the ADE to meet data and reporting needs. Since 1998 NORMES has received complete student records for all standardized tests employed in Arkansas, including SAT9, SAT10, ITBS, Benchmark and ACT test results. The complete raw data files from each test, including individual student responses (correct/incorrect), item selected (A, B, C or D), and complete demographic information are entered into the NORMES database. Additionally, data from the APSCN system on school (enrollment, teacher information, etc.) and student (mobility,

graduated, grades, etc.) are provided to NORMES for various reports and merged with the data system.

The NORMES data system presently contains over 8 million data records and approximately 450,000 active longitudinal data records for students in the K-12 system linking the appropriate testing data for each student. This system provides various raw data files to educational administrators, including student level data for analysis of the data sets used in NCLB computations, school reports, or any active analysis that is completed for the ADE and provided in either a public or private method. This transparency of the data, data records, and reports is an incredible strength of the ADE and NORMES partnership. Educational statisticians at the University of Arkansas and NORMES work to ensure the data are correct, the models are statistically accurate, and the professional development experts at NORMES ensure the data are presented in a useable and understandable format for teachers and administrators.

<p>Performance Measures Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.</p>	<p>Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or post research)</p>	<p>End of SY 2010-2011</p>	<p>End of SY 2011-2012</p>	<p>End of SY 2012-2013</p>	<p>End of SY 2013-2014</p>
<p><u>Acceleration of Arkansas's DDDM and Policy Research Agendas and Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness</u></p> <p>Actual Data Baseline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o None of the three (1-3) activities have been implemented. <p>2010-2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NA <p>2011-2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The research portal will be fully functioning and at least two research institutions will be sharing projects on the portal o Research topics will be matched to research organizations and data for the research will be supplied to conduct the research o Research will begin on the major teacher education preparation programs and professional development programs using student achievement results. <p>2112-2113</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o All the activities will be fully functional and utilized <p>2013-2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o An evaluation of the acceleration of Arkansas's DDDM and policy research agendas and evaluating teacher effectiveness programs will be assessed to determine modifications for process and program effectiveness 					

<p><u>Expansion and Enhancement of Cross-Agency Data Sharing</u></p> <p>Actual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o None of the four (4-7) activities have been implemented. <p>2010-2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The online data mart and Trusted Broker Unit will be established. o Research regarding the operation of Employment tracking and trends Initiative will be completed and data sharing arrangements between early childhood will be concluded. <p>2011-2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The three systems for enhancing the cross agency data sharing will be fully functional. <p>2112-2113</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o An evaluation of the three data sharing systems will be conducted to determine improvement modifications and return on the investment regarding the operation of the systems. <p>2013-2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Appropriate revisions of the Cross-Agency Data Sharing process that were identified in the previous evaluation will be implemented 					
<p><u>Restructuring ADE's SLDS Technical and Data Architecture</u></p> <p>Actual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o None of the four activities (8-11) have been implemented. <p>2010-2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A complete assessment of the transition process for improving the current SLDS and ETL process will be conducted. o Migration of technical architecture and establishment of daily batch loads from the transactional system will begin in up to ten pilot districts. 					

<u>Preparation for the implementation of the single sign-on system will be developed and staffed</u>					
2011-2012 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The restructuring of the Data architecture will be completed and the implementation of the technical improvements will be functional in 100 percent of the school districts. 					
2112-2113 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The single sign on will be complete and functional and used by all districts and over 30,000 teachers each year. 					
2013-2014 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An evaluation of the data architecture improvements and the single sign-on system will be conducted to determine necessary modifications for improvement 					

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction (18 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan to—

(i) Increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness;

(ii) Support participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) and schools that are using instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) in providing effective professional development to teachers, principals and administrators on how to use these systems and the resulting data to support continuous instructional improvement; and

(iii) Make the data from instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice), together with statewide longitudinal data system data, available and accessible to researchers so that they have detailed information with which to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches for educating different types of students (e.g., students with disabilities, English language learners, students whose achievement is well below or above grade level).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note the location where the attachment can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Five pages

(C)(3)(i) Increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness.

As an essential element of local instructional improvement systems, Arkansas wishes to enhance its current ability to link students with teachers. This capability is essential for teachers, principals and administrators in their ability to improve instructional decision-making and overall effectiveness.

This practical and relevant objective motivates the adoption and use of local improvement systems at all levels of the school district. The establishment of effective teacher-student links needed to include student achievement as a component of teacher effectiveness has become an important priority for Arkansas over the last year. Arkansas's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) collects

information on teachers, students, and the programs of study in which the students are enrolled, and these data provide the basis for analyzing teacher effectiveness. Arkansas has adopted and made effective use of a student growth percentile model methodology used in many States and localities to assess school and teacher contributions to student growth, and the results of these analyses have been widely disseminated and discussed among educators in the State. However, until now, most of these analyses have been aggregated at the district and school level but have not drilled down to the teacher and classroom level. With each presentation of the aggregated district-level analysis, educators across the State are requesting that teacher-level analysis be provided; the idea is popular among teachers themselves, making this a priority for ADE to address.

Currently, ADE's Cognos data warehouse environment captures the planned schedule of courses to be taught by teachers only twice each year, in October and June. On the other hand, ADE's Triand system captures regular information about the teacher, class, and student assignments as they change throughout the year, and it also receives from ADE's assessment vendor detailed year-end test results for individual students. In addition, ADE is moving toward a near-term ETL solution that will result in much more frequent uploads to the SLDS from the Pentamation environment. Subject to timing of the availability of the Pentamation ETL (extract, transform, load) upgrade, ADE will pull the requisite teacher, class, and student assignment data from one or, if needed temporarily, both of these sources at regular intervals to load an appropriate table within the Cognos data warehouse. When combined with year-end test results, ADE will then be able to use these data to perform the necessary growth model analyses and generate a variety of reports and visuals for display in its Cognos BI environment--accessible to teachers, school administrators and appropriate district staff. With more reliable and timely information about the actual teacher-student course relationships over the course of the year, ADE will then be in a position to perform its analysis at the teacher level with greater confidence that it will accurately reflect the specific contributions made by specific teachers to the progress of the students they teach.

Arkansas has just been awarded a Teacher-Student Link Project for Agency Leadership grant by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Under this grant, Arkansas will collaborate with Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Ohio to address a broad range of system, process, and policy questions around how to most effectively measure teacher effectiveness. Arkansas's participation in this project will provide the critical broader context for how to most appropriately collect, validate, and use data. Through this

grant, States will improve the collection, verification, reporting, and analysis of linked teacher and student data, with a special focus on the need for high-quality data that are comparable across States and validated by teachers. The project's goal is to develop and implement a common, best practice definition of teacher of record and a standard SEA business process for linking and validating teacher and student data including State assessment data. The first phase of the project, from April to June 2010, will involve a detailed needs assessment of each State and its participating LEAs; this assessment will evaluate each State's relevant data definitions, systems, and processes, and identify gaps between the current capacity/process and the project's goal. Participating SEAs and LEAs will then develop a common definition of teacher of record and a common business process for collecting and having teachers validate these data. Each State will then conduct a pilot implementation with its participating LEAs from July 2010 to October 2011. Collaboration across the participating States will ensure that a single, common definition and set of business processes are developed, and collaboration between the SEAs and their participating pilot school districts will ensure that the definition and processes accurately reflect the reality at the school level and will facilitate teacher buy-in. The CELT Corporation and the Data Quality Campaign will be actively involved in helping the Foundation implement the project. From October 2011 through the end of the IES grant period in 2013, ADE anticipates taking the piloted model fully to scale in its statewide implementation of teacher-student linkage.

Linking to Pre-K and Early Childhood

Information regarding student's education achievement has been almost non-existent, especially for those students not attending a public preschool or kindergarten. Arkansas wishes to extract data from local Pre-K and Early Childhood data systems and incorporate those data sets back into the SLDS. Though this data is currently available in "silos," it is often inaccessible once the child transfers to the K-12 system. Accomplishing this goal increases the usefulness and motivates adoption of existing data systems for improvement. The current lack of information delays teachers, counselors, and school administrators from providing the appropriate instruction and support services to meet students' educational needs for an unacceptable length of time. Historically, Arkansas has captured information about Pre-K students attending programs within the Arkansas public school system as part of its regular data collection processes for all students attending public schools. For some Pre-K students in private or publically funded programs outside of the public school systems, no data have

been captured or made available within ADE's data systems. Hence, the potential for bringing Pre-K and K-12 data together for longitudinal analysis has been somewhat limited. Comprehensive data exist in the State pertaining to early childhood and Pre-K programs, but they are contained in systems maintained by agencies other than ADE. Although a number of matches and special studies involving crossing the Pre-K to K-12 boundary have been performed, Arkansas has not previously achieved the cross-agency data sharing in this domain that it now seeks to establish. ADE plans to take a substantial step in addressing these limitations through a data-sharing arrangement with Arkansas's Pre-K program, the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program, administered under the DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. The ABC program serves 3- to 5-year-olds in Pre-K programs run by 318 agencies, including 145 school districts and cooperatives and 173 private providers in either center-based classrooms or through its Home Instruction Program for Parents of Preschool Youngsters. Places are allocated to children in families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold, with priority funding for programs in low-performing school districts. Importantly, the ABC program is of very high quality as measured by teacher standards, class sizes, and support services.

The ABC serves 25,096 children, or one half of children eligible, and about one third of the 79,000 children in the State in this age group, including an approximately 9,000 children not currently known to ADE. The ABC program maintains a comprehensive roster of demographic information on all Pre-K enrollments and also maintains data pertaining to a number of screenings it performs on children participating in the program, particularly those in need of early intervention because of physical, emotional, or health problems. All ABC children are required to have an annual health and developmental screening. Body Mass Index (BMI) data are collected on all ABC children through ABC's web-based reporting system, and ABC children are assessed three times per year using the Pearson Work Sampling System. Information is maintained on early interventions triggered as a result of these screenings. ABC also maintains information on the educational background of teachers and paraprofessionals serving in its programs. These data represent an excellent basis for the pursuing of a number of avenues of valuable research, all of which are not being pursued at the present time. To expand the population of Pre-K children known to ADE and available in the SLDS, ADE has recently reached an agreement with the ABC program under which the full roster of Pre-K students will be provided to ADE twice annually (which is sufficient regularity for the intended purpose). The information will include demographic and other screening-related information, as well

as teacher and paraprofessional educational profiles. ADE will run this file through its unique ID identifier system to generate a 10-digit ID for each student. The roster will then be unduplicated for students already known to ADE, and all new Pre-K students not previously known to ADE will be added to the SLDS, specifically to the Cognos data warehouse. As a result, as school-age children not previously known to ADE enter the Arkansas public school system, they will already have a record relating to their Pre-K experience. In this way, ADE will achieve the objective of being able to extend its longitudinal view for a much larger percentage of its students back into Pre-K. Using the screening information and information on early interventions, ADE will be able to help itself and DHS to understand the efficacy of early interventions that are made as a result of ABC screenings, determine the impact of Pre-K teacher educational attainments, and evaluate other dimensions of the Pre-K programs delivered from the perspective of how the students progress later in their K–12 experience.

ADE also has an agreement to obtain historical rosters, going back to 2005, which will allow it to immediately begin conducting comprehensive studies. Unlike some data received through cross-agency sharing, these Pre-K children will become students in the Arkansas K–12 school system, so it is appropriate that core data elements for these children be stored directly in ADE’s SLDS. However, it is likely over time that a broader range of data collected in Pre-K, childcare, and related early childhood programs will be most effectively handled through a data federation approach as previously described. ADE’s longer term objective is to expand the capture of information for all Arkansas children in this age category and ultimately to collect a broad range of information on children in the State from their earliest years to fully understand the impact of these experiences on their future educational success.

(C)(3)(ii) Support participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) and schools that are using instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) in providing effective professional development to teachers, principals and administrators on how to use these systems and the resulting data to support continuous instructional improvement.

To provide all stakeholders with the capability to better analyze, draw conclusions from, and collaborate around State education data, ADE has used the services of Enspire, Inc. to implement a new open source tool, named “Hive,” which is now available to the general public online. Hive has many analytical and visualization capabilities for school districts. The tool’s website is designed as a venue for collaboration, and Hive is contributing to an expansion of knowledge about student

achievement in the State. The tool allows stakeholders to explore State and local test scores at the district, school, and individual levels, with filter options for program participation, demographics, and socioeconomic status. It also allows users to place growth measures on one axis and scale scores on the other axis to see improvements since prior test administrations. Individuals can work on their particular area of interest: a parent can compare schools in a district, a teacher can try to discover patterns of student performance, and a principal can try to determine if there are weak areas of instruction in his/her building. Users can post and share analyses they create, comment on the work of others, and share ideas in threaded discussions. ADE will engage Enspire to enhance this tool to incorporate teacher-student links so that this information can be made an integral part of the Hive environment for interactive use by stakeholders for a broad range of purposes in addition to its use within the State's scorecard and dashboard environments.

Comprehensive SLDS Needs Assessment Program

In addition to current professional development tools, Arkansas seeks to continually build upon proven data system and visualization tools by conducting a comprehensive State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Needs Assessment Program. The SLDS needs assessment program will result in changes to the SLDS system that will make the data, reports and information readily available to classroom teachers and school administrators. An independent evaluation of the Arkansas SLDS project in December 2008, as well as regular interactions and discussions on the part of ADE with individuals at all levels of the educational establishment, has shown that use of the facilities provided by the SLDS is not universal. Although some non-use or limited use by individuals within the system can be attributed to a lack of education or training or ease-of-use issues (now being addressed via visualization), it is recognized that this shortfall is due in part to the system not always being fully attuned to the information needs of intended users and their unique roles. As part of the current initiative related to DDDM and the development of dashboards, scorecards, and visual analytics, ADE is establishing a process that emphasizes significant interaction with stakeholders in the major roles related to educational delivery, especially teachers and principals. ADE will undertake a more systematic and far reaching needs assessment in which in-depth interviews will be held with key individuals within each of ADE's more specialized administrative units (e.g., special education, school meals, facilities, distance learning, etc.). Interviews will also be conducted with representative individuals in corresponding or similar administrative roles in the State, district, and school level organizational structure, institutional partners, and appropriate external entities. This will result in the

development of a set of business use cases that more broadly captures these respondents' data needs. This information will be used to enhance the SLDS to be more fully responsive to the information needed by all the groups and individuals functioning in these roles.

(C)(3)(iii) Make the data from instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice), together with statewide longitudinal data system data, available and accessible to researchers so that they have detailed information with which to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches for educating different types of students (e.g., students with disabilities, English language learners, students whose achievement is well below or above grade level).

Arkansas Education to Employment Tracking and Trends Initiative (AEETT)

The focus of this effort will be to make data and information available to teachers and school administrators that have been previously missing when school policies and instructional programs are being considered. Information obtained from the various agencies will allow for changes in curriculum, scheduling, and student support resources that will better serve the students in the school. In August 2009, at the direction of Governor Mike Beebe, a Project Charter was executed by four State agencies to establish the AEETT consortium under the lead of the State's Department of Information Systems and operating under the direct oversight of the Governor's Workforce Cabinet. The AEETT was established to plan and execute a series of cross-agency matches and produce reports on the progress of students in the workforce, as well as other topics to unify Arkansas's current education, employment, and workforce development statistical results to aid in providing new and better services. The initial signatories to the agreement are the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Arkansas Department of Education (ADHE), Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), Department of Workforce Services (DWS), the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC), and the Arkansas Department of Career Education (ADCE). It is anticipated that several other agencies, such as Department of Human Services (DHS), will become signatories in the near future. The signatories approved a detailed work plan and budget for Department of Informational Systems (DIS) to carry out the initial phase of work, including the design, build, and implementation of a data mart data repository. This repository will contain selected education and employment data using extracted files from ADHE, ADE, DWS, and also the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (Income Tax System) that will be matched and merged for data analysis, with storage of non-personally identifying results. Data are to be included only after official documented approval from agency data owners, and once completed, the data repository will be used only by authorized

participating agency users for approved custom report views. Phase I will include identifying data sources to produce select reports, identifying missing data sources, documenting the methodology and approach for data storage and metadata, and documenting reports to be produced in this phase. The effort will also involve defining the scope of work of Phase II, including the involvement of additional agencies. The plan set forth in the AEETT MOU and project plan provides the basis for important major advances in cross-agency data sharing in the State. However, a great deal of work beyond what is currently envisioned or explicitly discussed in the Phase I plan will need to be addressed in both the short and longer terms to ensure that the solution is robust, fully protective of privacy, and capable of meeting a broad range of data sharing needs, including those that bear on achieving improved educational outcomes, develop new forward-looking data-sharing strategies that are flexible, efficient, and in keeping with both the spirit and letter of FERPA, HIPPA, and all other State and federal laws concerning the privacy of individuals.

TrustEd

Working in the Arkansas Research Center (ARC), ADE will focus on assisting DIS and other AEETT partners to develop and implement a set of technology solutions to achieve AEETT's goal of robust and widespread data sharing in the State while also protecting the privacy of individuals. In addition to its data-driven decision making tools and research focus at the University of Central Arkansas, the ARC will expand its work by engaging ERIQ at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock as an additional ARC partner. ERIQ has already been deeply engaged in planning and the initial development of a statewide facility to address the need for secure FERPA-compliant cross-agency information exchange. Of immediate concern is the need to address FERPA and related privacy concerns where student data are to be shared within a consortium that is under the direction of entities other than ADE and ADHE. To address both FERPA and general privacy concerns, the ARC Trusted Broker unit, TrustEd, will operate as a service bureau to the AEETT consortium by establishing a highly secure TrustEd registry of individuals known to AEETT partner agencies that will include linkages between agency-specific client IDs (CIDs). TrustEd will use industry standard master data management approaches, including deterministic and probabilistic matching, for entity resolution, thus ensuring a very high level of integrity of its registry index (something not achievable with social security number or other deterministic matching methods). It will receive requests for matched data from an external agency, perform a lookup within its registry to find the corresponding CID for the receiving agency, and send only the relevant set of CIDs to the receiving agency along

with the request for matched data. The receiving agency will return the set of CIDs back to TrustEd along with the requested data, and TrustEd will remap the data set back to the requesting agency CIDs, returning the requestor's original requested file with the additional data, as long as policy and regulation allows. If not allowed, TrustEd will return anonymized data that are still at a unit level if it does not compromise the privacy of individuals. This procedure will accomplish the necessary exchange of data, but no personally identifiable data will move between the agencies that are party to the exchange. This process will also support returning de-identified data or aggregates back to the originating agency, depending on what policy and regulation allows. The ARC will work with the AEETT consortium to undertake the research, development, and testing activities necessary to move these TrustEd solutions to the point where an appropriate technology transfer can occur and the solutions can be migrated into regular, ongoing use by the AEETT consortium.

The consortium's data exchanges, including operation of TrustEd, will initially rely on traditional data exchange mechanisms such as the physical exchange of data files and storage of the matched data in the receiving agencies' data repositories or a central AEETT repository. However, creating a truly robust data-sharing environment that can flexibly handle a substantial increase in the volume and types of data exchanged over time by different agencies requires a more forward-looking architectural strategy that builds on best practices and emerging trends in data exchange methodology. The system must be able to handle everything from the large data sets exchanged less frequently for policy and research to exchanges involving real-time access to cross-agency data in the course of transaction processing. To address these requirements, the consortium will likely need to migrate over time to a more federated approach based on the use of service-oriented architecture (SOA), web services, and SOAP technologies in which data from two or more agencies are linked virtually on an on-demand basis rather than physically integrated through the actual movement of data from a source agency and its persistent storage in a requestor's database recognizes that the solutions described in this section are very much in the category of emerging practice and have scarcely begun to be considered, much less implemented, in other SEA environments.

In whole, this significant initiative to link data sets and creation of public and researcher portals to improve accessibility of data should provide detailed information with which to evaluate effectiveness of instruction, strategies and differentiation of appropriates for educating different types of student learners.

Performance Measures Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or school	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
Comprehensive SLDS Needs Assessment Program Actual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Informal and ad hoc needs assessment has initiated. Subsequent years, as described, will include formal evaluation and identification of SLDS needs. 2010-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stakeholders will be identified and a needs assessment process including the needs assessment documents will be developed. 2011-2112 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A formal comprehensive needs assessment will be conducted and the data analyzed. 2112-2113 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Items identified in the needs assessment will be implemented in the data system to more effectively serve the needs of the stakeholders, including the addition of data elements, professional development, and simplification of the process to assess the data and reporting functions. 2113-2114 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An evaluation of the longitudinal data system will be conducted including a stakeholder's assessment of the modifications implemented as a result of the needs assessment. 					

<p>Arkansas Education to Employment Tracking and Trends Initiative (AEETT)</p> <p>Actual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The proposed activities have not begun; the process will begin in the 2010-2011 school year. <p>2010-2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff will be obtained and an assessment of the agency data bases will be conducted <p>2011-2112</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plans will be completed and processes implemented to implement cross-agency matches of data elements. <p>2112-2113</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The data mart repository will be implemented and data sharing will be functional and in full compliance with FERPA, HIPAA and other State and federal laws. All four agencies will be sharing data through the system <p>2113-2114</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An evaluation of Arkansas Education to Employment Tracking and Trends initiative will be conducted to determine appropriate modifications and improvements to the system. 						
<p>TrustEd</p> <p>Actual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Trust Ed brokerage system development plan has been completed in cooperation with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. <p>2010-2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agency agreements will be developed in conjunction with the agencies involved in the Arkansas Education to Employment Tracking and Trends Initiative (AEETT) agencies. The system will become functional on a limited basis. 						

<p>2011-2112</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The system will become fully functional and will serve as a conduit for data sharing and matching with other agencies in the State and researchers within and outside the State. <p>2112-2113</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An evaluation of the system will be conducted to determine appropriate modifications and improvements to the system. <p>2113-2114</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Appropriate revisions of the system that were identified in the previous evaluation will be implemented 						
<p><i>Linking to Pre-K and Early Childhood</i></p> <p>Actual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimal data sharing between the Pre-K and Early Childhood programs has taken place at this point in time. <p>2010-2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information will be gathered on all 318 Arkansas Better Chance Programs, 145 school district programs, and 173 private providers. <p>2011-2112</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data will be collected aggregated on the approximately 80,000 students served in Pre-K and Early Childhood programs. <p>2112-2113</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Linking system will be fully implemented including the designation of a unique identifier that will be used to determine significant data on each child in the program. 						

2113-2114

- An evaluation of the system will be conducted to determine appropriate modifications and improvements to the system and modifications will be made to improve the system and simplify the system for use by teachers and school administrators.

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(D) Great Teachers and Leaders (138 total points)

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals (21 points)

The extent to which the State has—

- (i) Legal, statutory, or regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) for teachers and principals, particularly routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education;
- (ii) Alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) that are in use; and
- (iii) A process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (D)(1)(i), regarding alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals:

- A description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents, including information on the elements of the State's alternative routes (as described in the alternative route to certification definition in this notice).

Evidence for (D)(1)(ii), regarding alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals:

- A list of the alternative certification programs operating in the State under the State's alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice), and for each:
 - The elements of the program (as described in the alternative routes to certification definition in this notice).
 - The number of teachers and principals that successfully completed each program in the previous academic year.
 - The total number of teachers and principals certified statewide in the previous academic year.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

(D)(1)(i) Legal, statutory, or regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) for teachers and principals, particularly routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education.

Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-409 the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has the authority to offer a nontraditional licensure program and has authority to establish grants to assistant individuals in high needs areas through this process. ADE also has granted authority to Arkansas colleges and universities to provide advanced licensure programs via their Master of Education

(M.Ed.) and Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) programs. In addition, the ADE has been a partner with Teach for America (TFA) for the past twenty years and has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) reviewed annually to outline this partnership. The MOU can be found in *Appendix D-1*.

Although the legislative authority allows for an alternative route for both teachers and principals, at the present time there does not exist an alternative route for principals. While the existing alternative routes for licensure programs are primarily designed for teachers, many of the teachers trained via alternate routes have and will continue to pursue principal or administrative roles with advanced study or a Master's degree. The ADE Rules Governing the Non-Traditional Licensure Program (NTLP) can be found in *Appendix D-2*.

(D)(1)(ii) Alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) that are in use.

Teachers

The Alternative Certification Program in Arkansas includes three pathways: 1) The ADE Non-Traditional Licensure Program (NTLP), 2) Teach for America Program (TFA) and 3) Masters in the Art of Teaching (M.A.T.) or the Master of Education (M.Ed.) program. The table below illustrates that approximately one-half of all new teachers are prepared in Arkansas colleges/universities and the other 50 percent are prepared equally by the non-traditional programs and through reciprocity from other States.

		2007	2008	2009	Total	%
All Licensure Areas	New Applicant	1491	1509	1485	4485	47%
	M.A.T.	169	226	205	600	6%
	Non-Traditional	829	682	547	2058	22%
	Teach for America	72	63	98	233	2%
	Reciprocity	919	819	393	2131	22%
	Totals	3480	3299	2728	9507	100%

These programs are integral to supplying teachers in high-need geographic and subject areas. The chart below outlines the number of secondary science and mathematics teachers who were licensed in AR via the various routes for licensure for the past three years.

		2007	2008	2009	Total	% per Track
169 Physical/Earth Science	New Applicant - Traditional	8	8	9	25	16%
	M.A.T.	9	12	3	24	16%
	Non-Traditional	21	20	17	58	38%
	Teach for America	3	4	5	12	8%
	Reciprocity	18	13	4	35	23%
	Total	59	57	38	154	100%
170 Life/Earth Science	New Applicant - Traditional	25	22	15	62	27%
	M.A.T.	8	14	11	33	15%
	Non-Traditional	23	23	15	61	27%
	Teach for America	4	3	4	11	5%
	Reciprocity	26	25	8	59	26%
	Total	86	87	53	226	100%
200 Mathematics	New Applicant - Traditional	42	46	43	131	31%
	M.A.T.	18	15	14	47	11%
	Non-Traditional	35	35	33	103	24%
	Teach for America	7	9	15	31	7%
	Reciprocity	59	32	24	115	27%
	Total	161	137	129	427	100%

The NTLP is administered by the ADE. Participants are issued a provisional license while employed as a classroom teacher in an Arkansas public school while completing requirements for an Initial or Standard Arkansas teaching license. The program is a two-year preparation track that includes Instructional Modules, appropriate employment as a classroom teacher, Induction/Mentoring, assessments, and portfolio development.

This table describes the impact on the NTL program in the Delta region of the State as well as in all high needs area and then specifically employed in the areas of mathematics and science.

Total NTLs 07-08 through 09-10	936	% of total
in Delta	203	22%
in all High Need subjects	505	54%
Mathematics	107	11%
Science	139	15%

Teach for America (TFA) is an independent non-profit organization whose stated mission is to build a movement to eliminate educational inequity by enlisting our nation's most promising future leaders in the effort. TFA recruits outstanding recent college graduates from all backgrounds and career interests to commit to teach for two years in urban and rural public schools in low-income communities throughout the United States. TFA provides the training and ongoing support necessary to ensure their success as teachers. Entry requirements include a bachelor's degree and a minimum 2.50 grade point average. The table below outlines the partnership between ADE and TFA for the previous nine (9) years.

TFA Corp Year	# of new first year participants	# of continuing second year participants	Total number of TFA teachers licensed and teaching in Arkansas
2001-2002	18	11	29
2002-2003	38	18	56
2003-2004	25	38	63
2004-2005	39	25	64
2005-2006	39	39	78
2006-2007	39	39	78
2007-2008	41	39	80
2008-2009	35	41	76
2009-2010	98	35	133

In Arkansas, there are seven university Master's degree programs that prepare candidates for Arkansas teaching licenses. These programs are designed for individuals without teaching credentials who have earned baccalaureate degrees in specific content areas and want to become teachers in an expeditious fashion. M.A.T. and M.Ed. programs are approximately forty (40) credit-hours tailored to accommodate most working students' schedules. These programs can usually be completed in twelve to eighteen months.

One of the most exciting and innovative initiatives in Arkansas was the creation of the Arkansas Professional Teaching Permit (PTP) in spring 2008. The ADE is seeking to recruit community members to "Bring Your World to the Classroom." Example: The local pharmacist could teach a high school chemistry class. Currently a local judge is teaching a history class at a local charter school and a mathematics teacher at a community college is also teaching a high school mathematics class. The PTP brings professionals into the classroom. This program not only enhances the

partnership between school and community, but also the partnerships with local community colleges or four year institutions of higher education. Business leaders who participate in the PTP are encouraged to offer internships to outstanding students over the summer and follow-up by awarding the young person scholarships. The possibilities of this program are endless. Please see the PTP Brochure in *Appendix D-3*.

Principals

Although it is not a typical alternate route to administrator licensure, the Administrator Licensure Completion Plan (ALCP) is an avenue available to LEAs whereby potential administrators can serve in this role while they are completing requirements for administrator licensure. The ALCP allows the educator to be employed in this role for up to three years while completing the program of study.

- In 2008-2009 there were 18 ALCPs out of 91 new Administrators, or 19.8 percent of the new administrators were on an ALCP.
- In 2009-2010 there were 26 ALCPs out of 114 new Administrators, or 22.8 percent of the new administrators were on an ALCP.

(D)(1)(iii) A process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage.

Shortages: Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-309 requires that no class of students shall be under the instruction of a teacher who is not licensed to teach the grade level or subject matter of the class for more than thirty consecutive days. If this does occur, then the local school district is required to seek waivers from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) for any educator employed and not fully licensed for the area of employment. The Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Addition of Areas of Licensure or Endorsement can be found in the *Appendix D-4*.

Identifying: The ADE Human Resource and Licensure Division maintains the data on all waivers granted and annually recommends to the Arkansas State Board of Education the licensure areas with the largest number of waivers granted as shortage areas for licensure.

Monitoring: The recommendation to the Arkansas State Board of Education is not based on an isolated year of data but is based on longitudinal data which is annually reviewed and monitored. For this reason licensure areas may be added or removed from the list of shortage areas. Of the approximately forty licensure areas for which waivers are traditionally sought, a list is made of the

total number of waivers granted. The licensure areas are then ranked and with the most waivers (i.e. the top two percent) being deemed as shortage areas. Occasionally, when a new licensure area is created or required such as elementary art, the licensure area is deemed a shortage area for two years for implementation purposes. A spreadsheet outlining the different shortage licensure areas for the past few years may be found in the *Appendix D-5*.

Evaluating: Teachers and principals who are employed on waivers must complete an Additional Licensure Plan (ALP) or Administrator Licensure Completion Plan (ALCP) and make adequate yearly progress to become fully licensed in these areas. These two programs allow the educator to be employed for a maximum of three years while completing a program of study to become fully licensed. Educators who fail to make progress annually on their program of study are denied waivers to be employed for the following year. This process has been an effective way to assist LEAs in obtaining fully licensed educators in the designated shortage areas. During the 2008-2009 school year, 1127 waivers were approved and 168 waivers were denied. To date in the 2009-2010 school year, 1066 waivers have been approved and 101 waivers have been denied.

Preparation:

1) As previously mentioned, teachers and principals who are employed on waivers must complete an Additional Licensure Plan (ALP) or Administrator Licensure Completion Plan (ALCP) and make adequate yearly progress to become fully licensed in these areas. These two programs allow the educator to be employed for a maximum of three years while completing a program of study to become fully licensed. 2) Also, Ark. Code Ann. § 6-81-608 and Ark. Code Ann. § 6-81-609 offer incentive programs and funding from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) for those educators enrolled in Arkansas colleges/universities seeking to obtain dual licensure in any areas "declared shortage areas by the ADE." For this reason it is imperative that the annual review, identification and monitoring of the areas of licensure declared shortage areas continues. 3) Shortage areas are also reported annually to the USDOE to enable teachers in these areas to have loan forgiveness based on the federal guidelines. The ADE facilitates the loan forgiveness information to all schools and districts via an annual Commissioner's Memo.

Filling:

Prior to July 1, 2009, this designation of shortage areas also enabled LEAs to recruit retired teachers licensed in these shortage areas to their schools and districts. The educator was allowed to receive

their annuity from the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System as well as their full teacher salary. Effective July 1, 2009, any retired educator who has been terminated from employment for a minimum of 180 days may also be reemployed without loss to their retirement benefits.

A list of all shortage areas is made available to participants in the Non-Traditional Licensure Program (NTLP) at the NTLP orientation to advise them of shortage areas and thus potential job openings. NTL candidates are counseled prior to application regarding the areas (geographic and subject) where they are most likely to be hired. NTL candidates are encouraged to license in subject-shortage areas and are heavily recruited to teach in high-priority LEAs.

The NTL program provides the bulk of Physical Science teachers entering the Arkansas teacher workforce each year. All NTLP mathematics teachers are hired each year with LEAs state-wide continuing to contact the NTL office with shortages in this content area. The ADE Office of Teacher Recruitment and Retention maintains a list of high-priority LEAs and directs NTLP participants to apply in these districts. The use of Race to the Top funds will support the NTL program for shortage areas in Arkansas and especially in the Delta.

Reform Plan Criteria

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance (58 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to ensure that participating LEAs (as defined in this notice)—

(i) Establish clear approaches to measuring student growth (as defined in this notice) and measure it for each individual student; (5 points)

(ii) Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement; (15 points)

(iii) Conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals that include timely and constructive feedback; as part of such evaluations, provide teachers and principals with data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools; (10 points) and

(iv) Use these evaluations, at a minimum, to inform decisions regarding— (28 points)

- (a) Developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development;
- (b) Compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals, including by providing opportunities for highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) to obtain additional compensation and be given additional responsibilities;
- (c) Whether to grant tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures; and
- (d) Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve, and ensuring that such decisions are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures.

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Ten pages.

(D)(2)(i) Establish clear approaches to measuring student growth (as defined in this notice) and measure it for each individual student.

Arkansas employs two accountability models, a State model developed in response to the Arkansas Student Assessment and Accountability Act and a State growth model developed in response to the federal No Child Left Behind requirements for pilot growth models used in Adequate Yearly Progress determinations. (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-401 et. seq.). The two models function for different purposes--State accountability and NCLB accountability. Student performance on the grades three through eight Arkansas criterion-referenced benchmark exams is employed in both models. Each model seeks to give schools credit for students achieving grade level proficiency as well as for students making incremental progress toward proficiency. The State model uses State performance categories and subcategories from the Arkansas Benchmark Exams to credit schools for student performance and for annual change in performance. The NCLB model uses State performance categories and the change in scaled score on the vertically moderated score scale from the same Arkansas Benchmark Exams to give schools credit for student performance and for annual change in performance in meeting adequate yearly progress.

The State accountability model consists of two indices: a performance index and a gain index. The performance and gain indices are based on a value table structure with values for attained performance in the prior year based on performance levels of students (performance index), and values for transition within and between performance subcategories within the table (gain index). The performance index is an aggregated score based on values assigned to each student based on the performance categories of Below Basic, Basic, Proficient or Advanced earned on the exam. Values for each performance category are aggregated and schools receive a rating based on five school performance levels. The gains index is an aggregated school score based on the performance of a cohort of students with scores from the Arkansas Benchmark Exam for two consecutive years. A positive value is assigned to students moving from a lower subcategory to a higher performance subcategory, a zero value is assigned to students maintaining the same performance subcategory, and a negative value is assigned to students moving from a higher performance subcategory to a lower subcategory. Values for each transition cell are aggregated and schools receive a rating based on five school improvement levels.

The Arkansas growth model used for NCLB AYP accountability meets the specifications required by the USDOE for pilot growth models. The current model used for evaluating adequate yearly progress is a status plus growth model. Under this model, students are expected to achieve a year's annual growth as determined by the vertically moderated scale developed for the Arkansas benchmark exams. This curvilinear scale represents the annual growth in scaled score points a proficient student must achieve to maintain a proficient performance level beginning in grade three and terminating in grade eight. Expected growth for students below the proficient score at baseline is calculated by projecting a path to proficiency by grade eight based on the student's distance from proficiency in grade eight, weighted by the proportion of distance expected in one year to scaled score distance between proficiency at the current grade level and proficiency at grade eight. A proficiency threshold is calculated for each student at or above the proficient score at baseline to represent the point below which a student is no longer on a path to proficiency. This is most simplistically represented below.

Next year's target growth increment or proficiency threshold score =

$$= \left(\frac{\text{This year's proficient score minus next year's prof score}}{\text{This year's proficient score minus grade 8 prof score}} \right) \times \text{Student's score this year minus grade 8 prof score}$$

- GI = Growth Increment = required increase over the next year in scale score to ultimately reach proficiency at Grade 8 for a student with current-grade scale score (below Proficient) of x ;
- PT = Proficiency Threshold = required increase over the next year in scale score to maintain proficiency or above at Grade 8 for a student at with current-grade scale score (Proficient or above) of x ;

$P_{k=8}$ = Proficiency Scale Score Standard at Grade 8 = 700;

X_k = Student's current grade scale score

k = Student's current grade level

$k + 1$ = Student's subsequent grade level

P_k = Proficiency Scale Score Standard for student's current grade

P_{k+1} = Proficiency Scale Score Standard for student's subsequent grade

$$PT_{k+1} = \left(\frac{P_{k+1} - P_k}{P_{k=8} - P_k} \right) \times P_{k=8} - X_k \quad \text{if } X_k \geq P_k$$

$$GI_{k+1} = \left(\frac{P_{k+1} - P_k}{P_{k=8} - P_k} \right) \times P_{k=8} - X_k \quad \text{if } X_k < P_k$$

Schools receive credit for adequate yearly progress based on an aggregation of students meeting the proficient or advanced performance levels, as well as students that do not meet the proficient standard, but do meet the annual growth target as described above.

Arkansas's current growth model for NCLB will need adjustments if growth is to be used as one of the measures of teacher effectiveness and accountability. Teacher and principal effectiveness represents higher stakes use of assessment scores. Higher stakes require stability and defensibility in the statistical models employed to measure teacher and principal effectiveness due to smaller sizes of classrooms, among other issues, as compared to the use of growth models for school accountability under ESEA or State law. In addition, the ADE must plan for the transition from existing assessments used in growth models to new assessments developed to align to the common core standards. The Arkansas Department of Education will seek proposals from qualified entities to develop an acceptable statewide growth model that is aligned with objectives of the Department for measuring student growth to determine teacher effectiveness and accountability.

(D)(2)(ii) Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement; and

(D)(2)(iii) Conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals that include timely and constructive feedback; as part of such evaluations, provide teachers and principals with data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools.

Teachers:

In 2005, a new position for Assistant Commissioner was created at the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) whose responsibilities included the Offices of Professional Licensure and Teacher Quality. Teacher Quality is not only about the education and training of teachers but also in the sustainability of teacher quality through authentic feedback on their performance. When reviewing the previous assistance the ADE had provided LEAs with regard to teacher evaluations, it appeared that technical assistance had not been provided by the State since the early to mid 1980s.

In early 2008, the Commissioner asked that four (4) LEAs be referred to Ms. Susan Sexton with The New Teacher Project to assist in their research on teacher evaluations. Similarly during many conversations it became evident that Arkansas LEAs needed technical assistance in the review of the

system for evaluation of both teachers and principals. This assistance was needed due to the lack of individual district resources of time, personnel and finances to support a research based project in the creation of a system of teacher evaluation. In previous conversations with the Commissioner, this endeavor was discussed and funding was sought. It was not until the fall of the 2008-09 school year, when a source of funds (USDOE Title II A - Improving Teacher Quality Grant funds in the amount of \$80,000 annually) was available to support this initiative. As a result, the Teacher Evaluation Task Force was established to begin the work and the dream became a reality. The Task Force has twelve (12) teachers who were nominated by the Arkansas Education Association (AEA), twelve (12) building level principals nominated by the appropriate administrator's groups and eleven (11) stakeholders representing the ADE, business, Deans of the Colleges of Education, Educational Service Cooperatives, legislators, School Boards Association, superintendents, and assistant superintendents for human resources. This two-year research project includes a quasi-random sample of large and small LEAs, rural and urban LEAs, and LEAs from each geographic region in the State. A list of the task force members may be found in *Appendix D-6*.

On April 15, 2009, a Commissioner's memo was posted requesting all LEAs to submit to the Office of Teacher Quality a copy of the standard teacher evaluation form used by the district. One hundred seventy-one (171) of the two hundred sixty (260) LEAs in the State responded to this request.

Number of AR LEAs	260	
Number of Districts Responding	171	65.8% who responded
	#of districts with this component in their evaluation instrument	% of those districts who responded
* Evidence	25	14.6%
Check List	150	87.7%
* Professionalism	133	77.8%
* Professional Development	76	44.4%
* Criteria	165	96.5%
* Rubric	37	21.6%
* Pathwise © Domains	49	28.7%
* Student Data	6	3.5%
Attendance	46	26.9%

(* components included in Charlotte Danielson evaluation model)

The data revealed in this chart demonstrates that while the majority of responding LEAs have established criteria (96.5 percent), the evaluation tool was still in the check list format (87.7 percent) and lacked evidence (85.4 percent), a rubric (78.4 percent) as well as data on student learning (96.5 percent). Arkansas LEAs have already confirmed the need for the Teacher Evaluation Task Force.

The Vision that led to the Hiring of the Consultant:

Dr. Charlotte Danielson was contacted by the State on October 7, 2008, to lead this initiative. Dr. Danielson was a natural to employ as the education consultant due to the fact that: 1) Arkansas has an intense induction program centered on the Pathwise[®] model, 2) Arkansas is the only State which utilizes the Praxis III assessment as the capstone experience to convert an “Initial Teaching License” to a “Standard Teaching License” and 3) the ADE and State legislators support the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) through both program support and annual incentives. But, the fact that Charlotte Danielson was a co-author of all three of these programs with Educational Testing Services (ETS) made this a wise decision.

In addition, Danielson’s *A Framework for Teaching – 2nd Edition* is based on the original nineteen (19) components in the Pathwise[®] mentoring model and a clear expectation of “Professional Learning.” Because of ADE rules regarding teacher evaluation, Danielson’s model is a natural fit for Arkansas. These rules that were approved in 1997 are found in *Appendix D-7*. In section 4.00 of these rules on criteria, there are two subsections that are of special interest. Subsections 4.02 and 4.05 State:

4.00 Criteria -Local districts shall develop a teacher evaluation system that reflects:

4.02 A sound professional development program that promotes continuous growth of teachers.

4.05 A set of teacher competencies descriptive of the local district's expectations and aligned with teacher licensure principles.

The criteria outlined in 4.02 is a viable strand in the Danielson model and criteria 4.05 is a match since the total induction program for Arkansas teachers, Pathwise[®] and Praxis III, is not only aligned to the teacher licensure principles, they are the principles for licensure.

Work of the Task Force:

The Task Force members arrived for the first meeting in July of 2009. At this first meeting, members were asked to share a positive or negative experience they recalled from a previous evaluation either as the evaluator or the one evaluated. Throughout the next two days, the Task Force was mindful during the creation of the new Arkansas System for Teacher Evaluation to keep the positive experiences alive and yet work to neutralize the negative experiences. At the end of the first two days, a unanimous vote was cast to adopt the four (4) domains (Domain 1: Planning and Preparation, Domain 2: The Classroom Environment, Domain 3: Instruction, and Domain 4: Further Professional Responsibilities) and twenty-two (22) components from *A Framework for Teaching* as the Arkansas standards for effective teaching and the new teacher evaluation instrument. A brief description of the domains and components can be found in the *Appendix D-8*.

The implementation procedures and the various tracks for probationary teacher, non-probationary teachers and non-probationary teachers encountering difficulty have been drafted. Tentative descriptions of the three (3) tracks are outlined below:

- Track I – Probationary/Novice teachers will be observed several times throughout the school year and the observer will record evidence in domains 2 and 3 which include the art of teaching but may examine artifacts in the non-observed areas which are domains 1 and 4 or the science of teaching.
- Track II – Experienced teachers will rotate between the professional learning model and the formal evaluation on the domains and accompanying components on multi-year cycles. For experienced teachers there is a presumption of competence and a presumption that they will become better by enhancing their professional learning as their evaluation criteria. This professional learning is self-directed and should be centered on school-wide initiatives and their role as a classroom teacher. This track requires one formal observation with prescriptive professional development for each teacher even if scoring high. This teacher will then have another formal observation at the end of the year with informal and walk-through observations often in the school year. If at any time the experienced teacher encounters difficulty then the teacher would be reassigned to Track III.
- Track III (Intensive Assistance) – Experienced teachers in this track are performing significantly below standard. This track is designed to offer support and assistance and is customized to the needs of the individual teacher. The goal of placing a teacher in this track

is to bring their performance to standard. This is accomplished through awareness of the issues and assistance to improve. Failure of the teacher to performance at a satisfactory level will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The Teacher Evaluation Task Force is developing a rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation for teachers. All of these applications require *evidence* of teaching. To provide feedback to a teacher on performance, it is essential to be specific about that performance and evidence helps to provide such specificity.

What are the realized benefits of the novice teacher evaluation system?

The ADE Professional Development Office will be designing professional development (PD) for each of the components in the Arkansas Teacher Evaluation System. Rigorous and streamlined professional development will also be developed for the evaluators (usually principals) who will be implementing the teacher evaluation tools. Regardless of the score on a teacher's evaluation, all Arkansas teachers will receive prescribed PD for any area that is lacking. A Professional Growth Plan will be based on the outcome of the observation and drive the teachers PD experiences throughout the year. Teachers scoring proficient or distinguished will do self-evaluation and report the year's events and progress at the end of the school year. The evaluator will also have periodic meetings with each teacher throughout the year. The teacher's evaluation results will be compared to the academic achievement of his/her students. The data will be gathered via the proposed state-wide data collection system.

During the previous months, there have been four LEAs that have volunteered to pilot the new Arkansas Teacher Evaluation System. Resources have already been made available to those LEAs, and training is scheduled to begin in mid-January 2010. The State would like to expand the pilot to approximately ten LEAs if awarded Race to the Top funding. Those LEAs choosing to participate in the State's Race to the Top application will be required to adopt the State's teacher evaluation model unless they can prove they have and are implementing a comparable evaluation system.

Principals:

The original goal of the State was to develop both a teacher and a principal evaluation model. Therefore, a Principal Evaluation Task Force will be convened to establish the framework for effective building level administrators and the appropriate rubric, evaluation tool, and procedures will be developed. The Principal Task Force model is scheduled to begin summer 2010 and will be structured-similarly to the teacher evaluation system and the work of task force. A research-based set of standards will be the framework for the discussion. National consultants who are leaders in this initiative such as Vanderbilt University will be sought to facilitate this work. The performance indicators outlined in the 2008 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium's (ISLLIC) Standards will be a focal point. The Task Force will consist of twelve building level administrators, twelve superintendents and twelve stakeholders. The ADE will again be working with the Arkansas Association of Education Administrators (AAEA) in the appointments to the Principal Evaluation Task Force. Copies of the invitation letter and nomination forms can be found in *Appendix D-9*

During the 2007 General Assembly, an Interim Study was approved with the purpose of enhancing the development of school leaders across the State. For the next two years, representatives from the ADE, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), AAEA, legislators, representatives of the Arkansas Leadership Academy, and legislative staff met regularly to draft a proposal for the 2009 General Assembly. Representative David Cook led this study and sponsored the proposed bill that was drafted and eventually became Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-1-409 and which created the School Leadership Coordinating Council. One of the three purposes of this council was to "aid in the development of model evaluation tools for use in the evaluation of school administrators". The verb "aid" was listed in this bill since the initiative had already begun within the agency. The complete statute can be found in *Appendix D-10*.

Evaluation Design Vision

Arkansas proposes an evaluation system that includes the following design guiding principles:

- Research-based methodology for the evaluation design process
- Multiple measures over time
- Job-embedded performance activities
- Progress made on the State assessment, or its equivalent

- Principal interaction with individual teachers, number to be determined, with whom the Principal has elected to work during the course of the year for teacher professional growth
- Feedback provided to the Principal evaluated
- Scoring by at least two trained scorers, including supervisors and peers

No matter what the score, the principal will receive prescribed professional development for any area that is lacking growth. A Professional Growth Plan will be based on the outcomes of the evaluation and drive the principal's professional development experiences throughout the year. The principal will do self-evaluations and report the year's events and progress at the end of the school year. The evaluator will have periodic meetings with each principal throughout the year. The principal's observation results will be compared to the academic achievement of students and the data will be gathered from the state-wide data collection system. Principals with consistent high performance scores on the principal evaluation plus continuous high student achievement scores over a period of time may be selected by the State to become distinguished leaders that mentor other administrators.

Again, the ADE Professional Development Office will design training aligned to the evaluation system. Rigorous and streamlined professional development will also be developed for the evaluators who will implement the principal evaluation tools.

Those LEAs choosing to participating in the State's Race to the Top application will be required to adopt the State's principal evaluation model unless they can prove they have and are implementing a comparable evaluation system.

(D)(2)(iv) Use these evaluations, at a minimum, to inform decisions regarding—

- (a) Developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development;***

Since 2001, Arkansas novice teachers and beginning administrators have been involved in an induction program. As previously mentioned the new teacher evaluation and existing mentoring criteria are the same. All novice teachers are mentored for a minimum of one year, prior to the Praxis III assessment. Novice teachers who are licensed through a non-traditional program are mentored for the duration of the program (one to two years) and have "front-end" mentoring during the first months of the first year. Secondly, the administrator's induction program has implemented job-embedded professional development and experienced administrators as mentors. In both

programs the mentors are compensated via a stipend for their work with the novice/beginning educators. The novice teachers and beginning administrators are also provided funds to use for professional growth and/or professional materials.

(D)(2)(iv) Use these evaluations, at a minimum, to inform decisions regarding—

(b) Compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals, including by providing opportunities for highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) to obtain additional compensation and be given additional responsibilities;

Summary of Teacher Leaders by categories for school years 06-07 through 09-10 (as reported by LEAs)						
School Year	Lead Teacher Mathematics	Lead Teacher Literacy	Lead Teacher Science	Lead Teacher Social Studies	Lead Teacher Generalist	# of positions
2006-07	242	652	21	6	N/A	921
2007-08	284	728	26	6	N/A	1044
2008-09	267	603	27	8	11	916
2009-10	368	826	44	12	50	1300

The table above describes the number of teachers across the State identified as a teacher leader. During the 2007-2009 school years, a focus group was formed to discuss offering further support to these approximate one thousand teachers. As a result the Instructional Facilitator licensure endorsement was created as a result in April 2009. Race to the Top funding will assist 1,300 instructional facilitators in Arkansas obtain their endorsement. Some States may refer to these educators as a teacher leader, coach or mentor; however, Arkansas legislators requested the title to be Instructional Facilitators. The standards for this endorsement were drafted from the 2008 ISLLC Standards and a subsequent job description was written. A copy of the job description for Arkansas's Instructional Facilitators can be found in *Appendix D-11*.

Due to this initiative on the part of Arkansas educators, Arkansas was invited to become part of the larger group in the Summer of 2009. Arkansas was selected as one of eleven (11) States participating in the Teacher Leadership Consortium that has drafted national standards for Teacher Leaders. A draft copy of the Teacher Leaders Standards from December 16, 2009, can be found in *Appendix D-12*.

Also, as reflected in the performance indicators of the seven domains in the draft copy of the *Teacher Leaders Standards*, the Teacher Leader is often facilitating the work of the teachers and other professionals in the school and district. The seven (7) domains are:

I – Understanding adults as learners to create communities of learning

II – Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Outcomes

III- Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement

IV – Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning

V – Using Assessments and Data for Systemic improvement

VI- Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Communities

VII- Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession

Teacher and Principal Compensation Study and Pilot

Arkansas is committed to a strong accountability system for student performance and school improvement. The State believes it is very important, as we move forward in our educational reform efforts to develop a comprehensive differentiated compensation plan for principals and teachers. This plan could be inclusive of differentiated pay for principals and teachers who serve in geographical or subject shortage areas or who teach in the STEM fields. This plan could be particularly helpful to the rural areas of the State.

Many in Arkansas support a research-based compensation model linked to student growth using multiple measures, and a collaborative model for teaching and learning. An effective differentiated compensation model provides built-in support for helping principals and teachers improve instruction and professional practices. Arkansas allows for alternative pay programs pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-119. Two school districts have implemented these plans.

Currently, there are two teacher compensation programs in Arkansas available to schools.

- **Rewarding Excellence in Achievement Program (REAP)** – Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-2601 et. seq. allows LEAs to implement a restructured pay plan for their teachers as part of a State pilot program. To be approved, applicants for the pilot must show how the school will pay teachers based both on knowledge and skills and on performance, with each overall factor accounting for between 40 percent and 60 percent of the individual's salary. LEAs are allowed to design a model within those parameters, reflecting such factors as education level

and years of experience, and performance reflecting such criteria as students' gains on performance assessments and evaluations by peers and supervisors. Also, 70 percent of the teachers must sign support of the school's or district's REAP plan and 50 percent of teachers must elect to participate. Rules for this program can be found in *Appendix D-13*.

- **Alternative Pay** – Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-119 allows LEAs to create an alternative pay program for both licensed and classified personnel. The alternative pay is funded from existing school and or district revenue. No additional State funds have been appropriated at this time. The district is allowed to create the salary amounts to include additional responsibilities, mastery of new knowledge and skills, advanced career opportunities, increased student achievement, attracting highly qualified teachers or professional development exceeding State minimums. Rules for this program can be found in *Appendix D-14*.

Another program currently being used in Arkansas schools is the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) from the Milken Foundation. Arkansas also has two open-enrollment public charter schools that have developed differentiated compensation programs – KIPP and eSTEM.

Through the Race to the Top grant, Arkansas proposes to bring ten LEAs (inviting our *persistently low performing schools* and those that have experience with implementing differentiated compensation or have a desire to move in that direction) to the table to study how a statewide model for differentiated compensation could work. The other participating LEAs will also have an opportunity because of Race to the Top to pilot this new system with the understanding that they must sustain any successful efforts. The State will ask that the study group consider a plan that would include:

- Performance-Based Compensation
- Skill-Based Compensation
- Job-Based Compensation

It is very important to have a strong evaluation model like the models the State is and will be developing for teachers and principals to improve instruction, but it is also important to reward performance of the teachers and principals to do whatever it takes to move students forward. A

strong compensation program, and not just a salary scale, is possible and necessary for making a difference in teaching and learning in Arkansas.

This will be the initial goal of the task force and will be completed in the winter of 2011. The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (NCCTQ) December 2009 publication of *TQ Research and Policy Update* outlines the other areas the State must focus on in regards to developing a comprehensive differentiated compensation program. Arkansas is a rural State, which brings with it many challenges, including ensuring effective teachers in every classroom and effective principals in every school. The task force will consider differentiated compensation plans that could help:

- Provide incentives for teacher and principal recruitment;
- Build on or redesign the State's current incentives or benefits for teaching or being a principal in rural areas of the State;
- Develop recruitment strategies for aspiring teachers and principals through a "grow-your-own" program;
- Develop a teacher exchange program between high-performing and low-performing schools and provide incentives for participation;
- Target local paraprofessionals and community members to earn teacher certification; and
- Build a program of compensating teachers differently based on subject area shortages or on STEM-related instruction.

This compensation study and pilot can provide the framework for helping all schools in Arkansas to replicate this program. The initial goals of the task force will be completed the first part of 2011.

(D)(2)(iv) Use these evaluations, at a minimum, to inform decisions regarding—

(c) Whether to grant tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures; and

Arkansas does not have tenure status for either teachers or principals, but does classify probationary teachers, who have been employed by the same LEA for three consecutive school years and who are offered the fourth contract, as non-probationary status. "Teacher" for the purpose of this application includes all educators who are employed in an Arkansas public school except those serving in the capacity of Superintendent.

Arkansas uses the Praxis III Performance Assessment as the capstone experience for obtaining the Standard Teaching License. Since the novice teacher works toward completing the Praxis III during the first year of teaching, the committee decided the novices first teaching observation would be performed like Praxis III. This observation will still ensure rigor, transparency and fairness. After the first year, novice teachers will be evaluated by Track I, which calls for three formal observations with informal and walk-through observations to be determined by the individual LEAs policy. Again, Praxis III is the foundation for which Arkansas's Teacher Evaluation is based. Race to the Top funding will assist in the implementation of the Teacher Evaluation System to Arkansas's 260 LEAs. It will also assist in the development and implementation of the proposed Arkansas Principal Evaluation System, which will be designed to enable LEAs to monitor the performance levels of the administrators. The program will offer coaching and intensive assistance as needed (see D(5)).

(D)(2)(iv) Use these evaluations, at a minimum, to inform decisions regarding—

(d) Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve, and ensuring that such decisions are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures.

The Arkansas Teacher Fair Dismissal Act (ATFDA), which is outlined in Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-1501 et.seq, is relevant to all educators who are employed in Arkansas public schools except those serving in the capacity of Superintendent. Therefore, building level administrators are aware that poor performance that has not improved over time and for which technical assistance has occurred may be grounds for reassignment back to the classroom (for principals) or termination from employment. The ATFDA allows an LEA to modify the "terms and conditions" of the employment with proper notification without having permanent termination. Secondly, those experience teachers assigned to Track III (Intensive Assistance Track) should not be recommended for non-probationary status until the educator's level of performance has improved.

Student growth, as defined by the State, will be a significant factor in the annual evaluation of teachers and principals. The MOU with LEAs requires use of a robust evaluation system and student growth as a part of the evaluation to inform the removal of teachers and principals after ample time for improvement. Furthermore, as per this application, Arkansas will utilize Race to the Top funds to strengthen and improve upon its existing definition of student growth to incorporate additional formative, interim and summative measures including student portfolios, teacher made tests, and

other indicators of student success, for a rich, singly defined but multi-dimensional calculation of student growth over time. This improved and robust measure of student growth will replace the current measure and become the “State’s defined measure.”

Performance Measures Notes: Data should be reported in a manner consistent with the definitions contained in this application package in Section II. Qualifying evaluation systems are those that meet the criteria described in (D) (2)(ii).		Actual Data: Baseline (Current school)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
Criteria	General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
(D)(2)(i)	Percentage of participating LEAs that measure student growth (as defined in this notice).	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for teachers.	<10%	75%	85%	95%	100%
(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for principals.	<10%	<10%	85%	95%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems that are used to inform:					
(D)(2)(iv)(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing teachers and principals. 	<10%	75% / <10%	85%	95%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensating teachers and principals. 	<10%	**	**	**	**
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting teachers and principals. 	<10%	75% / <10%	85%	95%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retaining effective teachers and principals. 	<10%	75% / <10%	85%	95%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Granting tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals. 	<10%	75% / <10%	85%	95%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals. 	<10%	75% / <10%	85%	95%	100%
** Arkansas will bring together various LEAs to participate in a differentiated compensation study and pilot. The benchmarks for this section will be set after that time.						
General data to be provided at time of application:						
Total number of participating LEAs.		243				

Total number of principals in participating LEAs:		1055
Total number of teachers in participating LEAs:		32,855
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]		
Criterion	Data to be requested of grantees in the future:	
(D)(2)(ii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems.	
(D)(2)(iii) ³	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.	
(D)(2)(iii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.	
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems whose evaluations were used to inform compensation decisions in the prior academic year.	
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better and were retained in the prior academic year.	
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	Number of teachers in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were eligible for tenure in the prior academic year.	
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	Number of teachers in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems whose evaluations were used to inform tenure decisions in the prior academic year.	

(D)(2)(iv)(d)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs who were removed for being ineffective in the prior academic year.
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(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals (25 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals by developing a plan, informed by reviews of prior actions and data, to ensure that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools (both as defined in this notice) have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students; (15 points) and

(ii) Increase the number and percentage of effective teachers (as defined in this notice) teaching hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas including mathematics, science, and special education; teaching in language instruction educational programs (as defined under Title III of the ESEA); and teaching in other areas as identified by the State or LEA. (10 points)

Plans for (i) and (ii) may include, but are not limited to, the implementation of incentives and strategies in such areas as recruitment, compensation, teaching and learning environments, professional development, and human resources practices and processes.

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (D)(3)(i):

- Definitions of high-minority and low-minority schools as defined by the State for the purposes of the State's Teacher Equity Plan.

Recommended maximum response length: Three pages

(D)(3)(i) Ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals by developing a plan, informed by reviews of prior actions and data, to ensure that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools (both as defined in this notice) have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students; and

The State of Arkansas has put a significant amount of resources into ensuring equitable distribution of teachers and principals. Some of these prior actions include:

- **Master School Principal Program** – Ark. Code Ann. § 6-26-101 et seq. created the Master Principal program. The program is a voluntary three-phase program (approximately three years) that will provide bonuses to practicing principals achieving Master Principal status. The program is administered by the Arkansas Leadership Academy, which is funded by ADE. The Arkansas Leadership Academy and ADE jointly determine the selection of candidates, as well as, review and provide guidance in the areas of individual performance and develop rigorous assessments.
- **Housing Assistance** (Arkansas Teacher Housing Development Act) – Ark. Code Ann. § 6-26-101 et seq. created the Arkansas Teacher Housing Development Foundation (ATHDF) to provide affordable housing and housing incentives to attract high-performing teachers to high-priority LEAs.
- **ASU Online** – During the 2007-08 school year, Arkansas State University (ASU) in Jonesboro, Arkansas, expanded their administrative licensure program to include online delivery. The syllabus, curriculum, and faculty remained unchanged but this expansion was marketed to the teachers in rural Arkansas who may have over two (2) hours to commute to any university campus for their Master’s program. ASU is bringing the college campus to the communities where needed.
- **Distance Learning** – Almost all of Arkansas’s public schools (230) provide distance learning to ensure students have the academic courses necessary for 21st century learning and success. ADE provides demonstration grant to distance learning providers.
- **Institutions of Higher Education satellite sites** - Over one-half of Arkansas’s colleges/universities have developed satellite campuses across the State to serve the rural communities. Numerous young persons are obtaining their bachelor’s degrees in these remote locations and are employed as educators in Arkansas’s more rural LEAs.
- **Two -Year Institution Associate of Arts in Teaching degrees** – Arkansas currently has twenty-two (22) two-year institutions in some of the State’s more rural communities. These campuses provide a service to the hundreds of students by offering the Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) degree. Through articulation agreements this degree is transferrable to Arkansas’s four-year institutions for a baccalaureate degree in teaching/education.

- **Grants to Colleges of Education** – During the 2006-07 school year, the office of Recruitment and Retention within the ADE began issuing a \$1,000 reimbursement to any of Arkansas's eighteen (18) colleges of education for the purpose of recruiting students. The two focus groups are: sophomores already on campus in the academic areas of mathematics, science, English, social studies, or foreign languages and students, who may have dropped out of college prior to completion. Use of State funds for this program began for three years ago for the purpose of expanding on-campus recruitment in the Colleges of Education. Race to the Top will provide the State an opportunity to accelerate that program.
- **Professional Teaching Permit** – As previously stated in Section (D)(1) the Professional Teaching Permit (PTP) was created in spring 2008 to allow working professionals to use their expertise to teach one or two of classes per semester in a subject area related to their field. The State will use Race to the Top funds to market this program to Arkansas businesses and school communities. The PTP Brochure can be found in *Appendix D-3*.
- **Teach for America** – There are approximately 130 TFA teachers in Arkansas in the 2009-2010 school year.
- **Incentives for Teacher Recruitment and Retention in High-Priority Districts** – Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-811 created monetary incentives to recruit and retain high-performing teachers to high-priority districts. Legislation in 2009 increased the annual incentive pay to \$5,000 (new teacher in the district), \$4,000 (second year teacher to district), and \$3,000 (for returning teachers after 2nd year.)

The 2008 Arkansas Equity Plan is also attached in *Appendix D-15*.

(D)(3)(ii) Increase the number and percentage of effective teachers (as defined in this notice) teaching hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas including mathematics, science, and special education; teaching in language instruction educational programs (as defined under Title III of the ESEA); and teaching in other areas as identified by the State or LEA.

Increasing the Numbers of Effective Special Education (SPED) Teachers

In addition to the plans above, which will be paid for using State funds, Race to the Top funds will be used to accelerate the effectiveness of SPED and ESL teachers in the State.

The Arkansas Department of Education has identified Special Education as a critical academic licensure shortage area. To address this area, funds from Race to the Top will be used to assist the State in increasing the number and percentage of effective teachers in Special Education.

RTTT funds will provide assistance through tuition reimbursement programs to general education teachers who are interested in obtaining special education licensure. Tuition reimbursement will

assist teachers in completing coursework required for special education endorsement, increasing the number of teachers fully qualified to teach students with disabilities. To assist veteran general education teachers who add special education endorsement, funds will be used to expand the mentoring program to retain and support them during their first year of teaching special education.

Funds will be used to fund a new staff position for the Office of Teacher Recruitment in the Division of Human Resources/Licensure in the Arkansas Department of Education. The person in this position would work to ensure children with special needs are being taught by effective teachers in all areas of the State, with specific focus in the Delta region and other geographical areas identified as having a shortage of teachers with special education licensure. Funding from RTTT will assist the State in full implementation of activities that have been identified and established by law. As more teachers access coursework, colleges and universities will need to expand their development and method of delivering courses. RTTT funds will be used to assist higher education in the creation and expansion of online courses that can be accessed in all areas of the State. An increase of training programs will assist general education teachers in completing special education endorsement, as well as providing an opportunity to increase the knowledge and skills of all teachers who work with students with autism and other disability areas, including dyslexia.

Districts will receive financial assistance to recruit and retain teachers in the area of special education. Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-308 allows reimbursement for relocation and moving expenses of teachers who move to districts in the Delta region and other geographical areas of the State where there is a critical shortage of special education teachers. RTTT funds will be used for incentives to recruit teachers licensed in special education to work in those districts, and also in schools identified as needing improvement.

In an additional effort to retain special education teachers, a pilot program will be initiated in a limited number of districts with funds from RTTT. Funds will be used to hire and train administrative assistants/due process clerks to assist special education teachers in completing required paperwork associated with due process procedures and activities. This will enable teachers to be more effective in providing instruction and lead to improved student outcomes. Post-Race to the Top funding, participating districts may choose to continue to fund these positions if the pilot proves to be a success.

Increasing the number of effective English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers

The enrollment of students whose home language is not English has increased over 100 percent over the last ten years in Arkansas public schools. Currently, 40,081 language minority students are enrolled in 163 school districts, with 30,000 of this group limited in their proficiency of English, representing 88 home languages other than English (88 percent speak Spanish, with Marshallese, Hmong, Vietnamese and Cambodian representing the next largest groups). Recent immigrants, arriving with minimal English skills, are a large percentage of this population.

Arkansas currently does not have the number and percentage of teachers trained to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) and core content subjects to non-English speakers that it needs. This year school districts reported that an additional 900 teachers trained to work with English Language Learners would be needed to address the following instructional areas: teaching and assessment strategies for ESL, effective teaching methods for core content-based instruction, and alignment of State standards-based curriculum with effective ESL instruction. Arkansas will use Race to the Top funds to provide the training for half of this need.

Race to the Top will allow the State to provide the ESL endorsements required for preparation in each of these areas. Summer teacher training programs, including ADE's ESL Academy, and graduate-level course work leading to ESL endorsement will be provided for the additional 900 teachers school districts have requested. On-line professional development and ELL consultants, as noted in D(5), will provide on-going professional learning opportunities and support.

Expansion of Arkansas's Teach for America Program

Arkansas views Teach for America (TFA), both its corps members and alumni, as one of the best investments it can make for transforming Delta schools into models of success. For nearly two decades, Arkansas has witnessed the significant academic impact, both annually and longitudinally, of the 460 TFA teachers who have taught in Arkansas classrooms and the considerable contributions and leadership of TFA alumni who remain at the forefront of educational innovation and reform in the State, including an Arkansas Teacher of the Year, the founders/leaders of three different Arkansas charter schools, and at KIPP Delta College Preparatory Charter School, by far the highest performing school in the Delta Region, where all four school leaders are TFA alumni and two-thirds of the teaching staff are either TFA alumni or current corps members.

TFA has had a presence in the Arkansas Delta Region since 1991. TFA corps members are placed in high poverty schools, predominantly in hard-to-staff and critical subjects such as math, science, and literacy. According to the most recent student achievement data, 60 percent of TFA Delta corps members in their first year of teaching produced “significant plus solid” results in terms of student achievement. Solid results are defined as at least one year’s academic growth in a year’s time; significant results are 1.5 years or better in a year’s time. Thirty-nine percent of the teachers in their first year produced significant results. In year two, these results jumped to 77 percent significant plus solid, with 51 percent producing at the significant level. Based on these results and surveys of school leaders regarding the positive impact on teachers and students where TFA members have been placed, the request for TFA teachers has outpaced supply by 2 to 4 fold.

Due to the State’s long and successful history with TFA, Arkansas will double its TFA presence beginning in the 2010-11 school year. A couple of factors make this possible: 1) TFA has established a new regional training center to serve the Delta region with the intent of attracting more corps members to the Delta to complete their service; and 2) TFA has experienced an overall surge in high quality applicants because of the recent economic downturn. Some 35,000 applicants applied to TFA (nationally) this year, as compared with last year’s record high of 25,000.

In order to encourage more TFA corps members to remain in Arkansas and teach in high-need districts after their commitment period, the State will allow TFA training and support, along with State mandated testing of the *Praxis Series*®, to be an alternative certification path for teachers rather than requiring the traditional State or higher education operated alternative licensure paths.

Performance Measures for (D)(3)(i) <i>Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.</i>	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	**	**	**	**	**
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	**	**	**	**	**
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	**	**	**	**	**
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	**	**	**	**	**
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	**	**	**	**	**
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	**	**	**	**	**
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	**	**	**	**	**
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	**	**	**	**	**
**Arkansas will set the baseline for teacher and principal effectiveness in these areas this Spring. The percent increase target each year after will be 10 percent.					
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	63				
Total number of schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	62				
Total number of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	20,952				

Total number of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	2,153
Total number of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	63
Total number of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	62

Arkansas used the number of students in poverty by using the free and reduced lunch rate count. The schools are the number in the highest or lowest quartile.

Data to be requested of grantees in the future:

Number of teachers and principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as highly effective (as defined in this notice) in the prior academic year.

Number of teachers and principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as highly effective (as defined in this notice) in the prior academic year.

Number of teachers and principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.

Number of teachers and principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.

Performance Measures for (D)(3)(ii)	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or	End of SY 2010- 2011	End of SY 2011- 2012	End of SY 2012- 2013	End of SY 2013- 2014
<i>Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.</i>					
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of mathematics teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	**	70%	75%	80%	90%
Percentage of science teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	**	70%	75%	80%	90%
Percentage of special education teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	**	70%	75%	80%	90%
Percentage of teachers in language instruction educational programs who were evaluated as effective or better.	**	70%	75%	80%	90%

* At the time this grant was written, the State of Arkansas did not measure teacher effectiveness (based on the definition provided). However, this will be our plan for next year and in the future.

While Arkansas is not currently collecting this data, the data shared as part of The New Teacher Project is explained below:

The Widget Effect : Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness

The New Teacher Project: Daniel Weisberg, Susan Sexton, Jennifer Mulhern, David Keeling

The report entitled *The Widget Effect* examines the pervasive and longstanding failure to recognize and respond to variations in the effectiveness of Americas’ teachers. At the heart of this matter is the system for evaluating teachers. For two years, researchers from the New Teacher Projects (authors of *The Widget Effect*) collected data from four Arkansas LEAs (El Dorado, Jonesboro, Little Rock and Springdale.)

The Widget Effect is characterized by institutional indifference to variations in teacher performance. The five (5) indifferences reflected in the report are:

- 1) All teachers are rated good or great: A binary system with more than 99 percent of teachers receiving a satisfactory rating.
- 2) Excellence goes unrecognized: Truly exceptional teachers are not being identified.
- 3) Inadequate professional development: Failure to assess variations in instructional effectiveness precludes identifying specific needs of teachers.
- 4) No special attention to novices: Though it is widely recognized that teachers are less effective in their beginning years, however, over 66 percent were scored as “satisfactory.”
- 5) Poor performance goes unaddressed: While both teachers and administrators recognize ineffective teachers are in the schools, districts confirm the scarcity of formal dismissals based on poor performance.

Jonesboro’s data stated that zero percent of their probationary teachers were non-renewed for performance in five years and that 99.7 percent of tenured teachers received a satisfactory rating or equivalent. Similarly, Springdale data stated that 100 percent of tenured teachers received a satisfactory rating or equivalent. The data on Arkansas LEAs who participated in this research project and its resulting report is representative of most districts in the State.

General data to be provided at time of application:	
Total number of mathematics teachers. (licensed)	24,709
Total number of science teachers. (licensed)	25,594
Total number of special education teachers. (licensed)	6,510
Total number of teachers in language instruction educational programs. (licensed)	1,748
These numbers include those licensed in early childhood, middle level and secondary.	
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:	

Number of mathematics teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.

Number of science teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.

Number of special education teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.

Number of teachers in language instruction educational programs in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.

0

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (14 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

- (i) Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students' teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State; and
- (ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: One page

(D)(4)(i) *The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students' teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State.*

Though development to enhance and extend the value-add of the student/teacher link is underway, APSCN maintains a student/teacher link by mapping each student and teacher to a master course schedule within each school district's student management system. Though this linkage is currently developed, additional enhancements are planned to maximize utility of the linkage. The State's electronic transcript system, Triand, assigns unique identifies to each licensed public school teacher and linking this to the teacher licensure system allows the teacher to be linked with the institution of higher education teacher education program where the teacher was granted a degree and to a limited amount of subsequent professional development activities.

Arkansas has been awarded a Teacher-Student Link Project for Agency Leadership grant by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Under this grant, Arkansas will collaborate with Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Ohio to address a broad range of system, process, and policy questions around how to most effectively measure teacher effectiveness. Arkansas's participation in this project will provide the critical broader context for how to most appropriately collect, validate, and use data. Through

this grant, which engages States that already have the capability for capturing student-teacher course linkages, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation seeks to help States improve the collection, verification, reporting, and analysis of linked teacher and student data, with a special focus on the need for high-quality data that are comparable across States and validated by teachers. The project's goal is to develop and implement a common, best practice definition of teacher of record and a standard SEA business process for linking and validating teacher and student data (including State assessment data), with a small group of participating States beginning with three pilot LEAs within the State.

(D)(4)(ii) The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice.

An integral part in developing a competitive workforce for the 21st century depends on the availability of highly qualified teachers. Two of the most critical challenges for Arkansas, and especially the Arkansas Delta, are the availability of qualified STEM teachers and strong leaders for the K-12 system. The situation in Arkansas is especially acute since Arkansas ranks last of the 50 States in the percentage of the workforce in science & engineering occupations. How can Arkansas best expand the pipeline of first STEM teacher, and secondly teachers leaders State-wide, but especially in rural areas such as the Arkansas Delta?

Arkansas has many strategic assets in the higher education community around the State to help with this challenge, including but certainly not limited to partnerships between colleges of education and colleges of science and math, dual-degree programs for STEM majors and teaching certificates, creating alternate pathways for teacher licensure.

Funding and regulatory barriers have prevented some higher education institutions, including both two-year and four-year institutions, from implementing key aspects of their programs. The lack of funding is tied to a lack of demand by potential candidates, particularly in the rural areas of the State where careers in education in general, and in particular in STEM education, are often not pursued due to the cost of higher education and lack of programs in the rural regions such as the Arkansas Delta. This classic "chicken or the egg" problem has prevented these higher education institutions from building and scaling such alternate, high-quality programs due to the initial start-up costs and

lack of assurance that there will be demand. Also, the very regulation that is intended to ensure quality educational experiences can be a barrier for innovation.

Arkansas proposes to alleviate these problem and spur innovation past the conceptual stage into production, by, in effect, guaranteeing tuition slots needed to fill these programs and thereby generating 100 STEM and 100 teacher leaders per year for three years for its hard to reach rural areas, by issuing two competitive RFP's.

STEM Teacher Preparation Program RFP (\$4M)

A \$4M RFP inviting higher education institutions to design, develop and implement within a year a complete alternative STEM teacher preparation program that serves the STEM needs of Arkansas's rural schools, including the creation of a pathway for elementary math and science specialists. Higher education institutions, such as those described above, will be invited to partner or singularly develop a curriculum, recruiting, and staffing plan that meets the State's credentialing requirements. The RFP would be payable \$1M in the first year for development, and then up to \$1M per year for the 3 years thereafter in tuition. Tuition is estimated at \$10,000/year enabling 100 new STEM teachers/year and 300 new teachers over the course of the RTTT grant at 100% paid tuition (i.e. free to students) to thereby eliminate the affordability constraint so often found in rural areas.

Alternative Teacher Preparation Program RFP (\$4M)

A \$4M RFP inviting higher education institutions to design, develop and implement within a year a complete alternative teacher preparation program that serves the capacity needs of the State. Higher education institutions, such as those described above, will be invited to partner or singularly develop a curriculum, recruiting, and staffing plan. The RFP would be payable \$1M in the first year for development, and then up to \$1M per year for the 3 years thereafter in tuition. Tuition is estimated at \$10,000/year enabling 100 new teachers/year and 300 new teachers over the course of the RTTT grant at 100% paid tuition (i.e. free to students) to thereby eliminate the affordability constraint so often found in several areas of the State.

Six-State Consortium

In addition to providing free tuition, Arkansas recognizes that it needs to develop effective recruiting and retention strategies targeting the next generation of teachers. Arkansas has been involved the past 6 months with a *Six-State Consortium* ("Revisioning the Professional Educator Continuum") that has

joined together to envision a new system of educator recruitment, preparation, development and empowerment. Arkansas will include these concepts from the Six-State Consortium in its two \$4M RFPs' Statement of Work.

Finally, on the issue of sustainability, with this initial infusion of \$8M, Arkansas will have launched at least two or more innovative teacher preparation and credential programs in the higher education community that has long struggled to target STEM, leadership and rural needs. The starting costs of development (curriculum creation, design and refinement) including recruitment of staff (up to one year in advance) and students will create a sustainable program that will have a 600 teacher alumni group from which to further build an effective and continuous marketing and recruitment plan.

Building on the Partnership with the University of Arkansas and NORMES

The State will expand its partnership with the University of Arkansas and the National Office for Research, Measurement and Evaluation Systems (NORMES) to provide leadership to other higher education institutions in Arkansas through development of credit-bearing courses in educational assessment and evaluation of programs and practices. NORMES is in a unique position in its partnership with ADE. Faculty and staff at NORMES interact with teachers and leaders on a continuous basis as part of its current contract with ADE. NORMES faculty and staff encounter the questions and concerns of educators that reveal the gaps in pre-service teacher preparation and school leader preparation. Courses developed at NORMES can be offered through the University of Arkansas as a part of pre-service and graduate degree program preparation, but this coursework can also be deployed to meet the in-service needs of all Arkansas educators. This two-pronged approach to developing teacher's and leader's skills and knowledge in educational assessment and program and practice evaluation builds the capacity of the State to develop current educators while developing the next generation of educators in pre-service and leadership programs.

Finally, the Arkansas Department of Education is collaborating with the Arkansas Education Association and the Arkansas chapter of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education in a research study to help determine the effectiveness of the State's teacher preparation programs. The study will include an assessment of teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of their preparation programs and the level of support provided by those programs. The study will also analyze the relationship of teacher preparation programs to student achievement, teacher retention rates, and teacher placement rates.

Performance Measures	Actual Data: Baseline	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of teacher preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.	0%	75%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of principal preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.	0%	75%	100%	100%	100%
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of teacher credentialing programs in the State.	18				
Total number of principal credentialing programs in the State.	9				
Total number of teachers in the State. licensed	57,597				
Total number of principals in the State. licensed	7,046				
<p>The number of teachers and principals in the State is the number of licensed educators, not the number employed in Arkansas public schools.</p> <p>The 7,046 number of licensed principals in the State may not be unique social security numbers since some principals are licensed in more than one grade span level.</p>					
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:					
Number of teacher credentialing programs in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.					
Number of teachers prepared by each credentialing program in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.					
Number of principal credentialing programs in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.					

Number of principals prepared by each credentialing program in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	[REDACTED]
Number of teachers in the State whose data are aggregated to produce publicly available reports on the State's credentialing programs.	
Number of principals in the State whose data are aggregated to produce publicly available reports on the State's credentialing programs.	

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals (20 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan for its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to—

(i) Provide effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning and collaboration time to teachers and principals that are, where appropriate, ongoing and job-embedded. Such support might focus on, for example, gathering, analyzing, and using data; designing instructional strategies for improvement; differentiating instruction; creating school environments supportive of data-informed decisions; designing instruction to meet the specific needs of high need students (as defined in this notice); and aligning systems and removing barriers to effective implementation of practices designed to improve student learning outcomes; and

(ii) Measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of those supports in order to improve student achievement (as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Five pages

(D)(5)(i) Provide effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning and collaboration time to teachers and principals that are, where appropriate, ongoing and job-embedded. Such support might focus on, for example, gathering, analyzing, and using data; designing instructional strategies for improvement; differentiating instruction; creating school environments supportive of data-informed decisions; designing instruction to meet the specific needs of high need students (as defined in this notice); and aligning systems and removing barriers to effective implementation of practices designed to improve student learning outcomes.

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has long understood the potential for change by recognizing the need to back-map the change expected in student achievement to the change needed in student behaviors, teaching behaviors, and leadership behaviors. The Smart Initiatives began in 1998 and focused on standards, professional development, student assessment and accountability. The goal of the State's initiatives is for all students to meet or exceed grade level expectations in mathematics, literacy, and science.

Arkansas allocates professional development funding at the State and local level. Smart grants are provided to fifteen (15) education cooperatives and twelve (12) STEM Centers which are regionally located across the State. The State-funded Smart grants provide funding for literacy, math and science specialists and the professional development provided by the State. The specialists develop and present a variety of comprehensive and on-going professional development opportunities related to the content areas and pedagogy. Every educator in Arkansas is required to participate in sixty (60) hours of quality professional development each year to maintain an Arkansas teaching license. The specialists provide face-to-face training and on-site technical support and coaching to facilitate implementation. On-line professional development, Arkansas IDEAS, is provided for additional support. Race to the Top funding will permit Arkansas to progress classroom instruction and build leadership capacity through focused professional learning targeted to meeting the needs of all students. The funding will enable the State to bring the identified tools and services to the building principal and classroom teachers in a timely manner as noted in A(2)(i)(a).

Leadership

Smart Leadership is Arkansas's initiative to ensure that all of the State's district and school administrators serve as instructional leaders and have the ability to create an environment that promotes high-level learning in each district and school. ADE, Arkansas Leadership Academy (ALA), education cooperatives, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA), Arkansas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (AASCD), and other stakeholders have partnered to provide targeted professional learning opportunities and technical support to build instructional leadership capacity as noted in the State-adopted ISLLC Standards. The Race to the Top funds will provide the opportunity to increase the number of participants engaged in leadership institutes and enhance the level of implementation support and coaching.

Leadership Goal: Provide professional learning opportunities to ensure leadership capacity for understanding and supporting implementation and alignment of structures and resources, assessment for and of learning, research-based instructional strategies, analyzing and interpreting data, and promoting professional learning teams.

Activity One: Expand and/or develop leadership institutes for principals, school leadership teams, instructional facilitators (academic coaches), teacher leaders, State and district support.

Institutes will be available to all schools with priority to the lowest performing schools. The institutes will focus on improved performance in creating and living the mission, vision, and beliefs; leading and managing change; creating deep knowledge about teaching and learning; building and maintaining collaborative relationships, collection, analysis and interpreting data; and building and sustaining accountability systems.

Leadership Institutes will be provided regionally and facilitated by State and national consultants. Institutes will be developed and ready for participants by July 2010. Institutes will be evaluated annually, with revisions made based on data from the implementation rubric. Institutes will be sustained through federal, State, and local funds by reallocating and prioritizing funding.

Activity Two: Expand Leadership Support Specialists.

Currently, Leadership Support Specialists are assigned to schools that purchase service from the ALA. The Race to the Top funding will expand the service by providing on-site coaching and support to schools that participate in the leadership development institutes. The Leadership Support Specialists will be housed regionally in the education cooperatives. In support of the implementation of learning from the institutes, the specialists will customize professional learning specific to the needs of the school. Also, the specialists will provide professional development specific to State projects such as the Instructional Improvement System (IIS) and the implementation of the new teacher and principal evaluations (as noted in D(2)). In addition, the Leadership Support Specialists will provide on-site coaching for schools in planning, resource allocation, instruction and assessment, coaching and feedback loops, and evaluation of practices. The success of the leadership support specialist project will be evaluated on the ALA leadership rubrics and the progress of the schools. Education cooperatives and schools will continue to support Leadership Support Specialists with federal, State, and local funds by reallocating and prioritizing budgets after the completion of the Race to the Top grant.

Activity Three: Develop on-line leadership professional development opportunities.

A Request for Proposal will be issued to create a suite of online Leadership modules. These modules and related facilitator guides will be designed to improve student achievement by building and strengthening the capacity of instructional leaders to promote, support, and sustain programs, practices, and policies that improve teaching and learning as noted in C(2), C(3), D(2). The features of these modules will include:

- A. Expert commentary developed from a pool of leadership experts collaboratively identified by ADE, ALA and external shareholders.
- B. The following learning resources would be a part of these modules:
 - **Video examples** of effective leadership in action to illustrate featured practices and strategies.
 - **Video reflections** by leadership focused around their changing roles and movement from management to instructional leadership.
 - **Video interviews/commentaries** by leadership experts.
 - **Professional readings.**
 - **Activities** to enable the participants to demonstrate knowledge and skills relative to a topic.
 - **Assessments** to monitor implementation of the featured practices and measure their impact.
 - **Online discussion** and other collaborative activities designed to build professional learning communities engaged in the exchange of ideas, collaborative analysis of classroom video and student work, and team-based practices focused on student data and achievement.

The on-line leadership modules will be sustained with funding from the State's On-Line Professional Development Initiative (Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-707).

Teaching and Learning

The State's Smart Initiatives focused on mathematics and literacy (see appendix for additional information on the initiatives). Two years ago, the initiative expanded to include science. The math, science and literacy specialists collaborate to develop professional development opportunities and provide technical support and on-site coaching for classroom teachers. Race to the Top funding will provide the opportunity to increase the number of educators participating in comprehensive

professional learning focused on teaching and student learning. Tier One Institutes will provide current information about the new Common Core Standards, common, high-quality assessments and the use of the Instructional Improvement System (IIS) to more effectively develop instruction and intervention to meet the needs of students , as noted in B(2), C(3), D(2). Tier Two Institutes will engage the educator in constructivist implementation of the curricula. Tier Three Institutes will immerse the educator into content-specific learning which will lead them deeper into conceptual understanding and reflection of teaching and learning, as noted in C(3). Leadership support, resource allocation, and accountability for fidelity of implementation will be expected by each participating school.

Teaching and Learning Goal: Provide professional learning opportunities to ensure capacity for curriculum development, assessment for and of learning, research-based instructional strategies, analyzing and interpreting data, and promoting learning teams.

Activity One: Align and expand literacy professional development opportunities for teachers in Grades K-12.

Activity 1a: ADE Curriculum Specialists, State Literacy Specialists and consultants will assemble a team to design professional development institutes to focus on the Common Core Standards for K-12 English Language Arts, formative and interim assessments and utilization of the IIS for effective planning and teaching. Tier One Institutes should begin by June 2011.

Activity 1b: State Literacy Specialists and consultants will align, revise, and/or expand current K-12 Literacy professional development institutes. Tier Two Institutes will be revised to ensure alignment to the Common Core Standards, 21st Century Learning Skills and integration of STEM careers as appropriate.

Activity 1c: State Literacy Specialists and consultants will create an adolescent literacy institute focused on utilizing high-yield instructional strategies and routines for reading and writing in all content areas; designing common assessments that provide formative and summative information; analyzing student work and other student achievement data; providing appropriate interventions; and professional learning teams. High school and middle school student needs and interventions will be addressed in this Tier Two Institute.

Activity 1d: State Literacy Specialists and consultants will create Tier Three Institutes that address specific issues related to student achievement. Tier Three Institutes will be focused on data-driven topics and will be designed to function as learning teams. For example, current professional development data and student achievement data support more in-depth professional learning in writing, with emphasis on content and style.

Literacy Specialists will continue to provide on-site instructional coaching and technical support to educators enrolled in Institutes. In addition, participants will be expected to engage in on-going, job-embedded professional learning during dedicated professional learning time at school.

Implementation of strategies and the progress in student achievement will be evaluated within each institute. Consultants will train the State literacy specialists as trainers so the institutes may be sustained. Federal, State and local funds will be utilized to sustain the literacy institutes.

Activity Two: Align and expand science professional development opportunities for teachers in Grades K-12.

Activity 2a: ADE Curriculum Specialists, State Science Specialists and consultants will assemble a team to design professional development institutes to focus on the Common Core Standards for K-12 Science. Tier One Institutes should begin by June 2012 or as the Common Core Standards for Science become available.

Activity 2b: The Science Specialists developed Sci~Keys for grades 5, 7, and Biology (tested grades in Arkansas). Over 500 teachers received Sci~Keys training last summer (first year of the institutes), with pre/post-tests indicating a statistically significant improvement in science content knowledge. ADE is currently collecting follow-up data utilizing on-site instructional facilitation (coaching). A team of literacy, math, science, and engineering consultants will be assembled to develop additional professional development opportunities for additional grades spans therefore providing continuous support K-12. Tier Two Institutes will be aligned to the Common Core Science Standards, incorporate 21st Century Learning Skills and STEM careers.

Activity 2c: State Science Specialists and consultants will annually examine State assessment data to identify problematic areas. The team will create Tier Three Institutes that specifically address a deeper understanding to these topic/concepts. Tier Three Institutes will be focused on data-driven

topics and will demonstrate how participants function as learning teams for continued professional growth.

Activity 2d: Two, fully equipped training sites will be furnished to support the training as a lab experience. Currently, teachers are required to utilize a minimum of 20 percent of science instruction in lab experiences. The training sites will provide models of well designed, organized, and safety focused learning environments. These sites will also provide opportunity for studio quality videotaping of sessions that can be posted to Arkansas iTunesU and Arkansas IDEAS, on-line professional development portal. Sustainability is assured through the utilization of Arkansas's current infrastructure of Science, Math, and Literacy specialists.

Institute participants will receive continued on-site instructional coaching and technical support from the State Science Specialists. The use of professional learning communities will be encouraged in order to develop teacher leaders in each school district. All materials are available online to Arkansas educators. The institutes will evaluate the implementation of strategies and the progress in student achievement. Consultants will train the State science specialists as trainers so the institutes may be sustained. State and federal funds will be utilized to sustain the science institutes.

Activity Three: Align and expand math professional development opportunities for teachers in Grades K-12.

Activity 3a: ADE Curriculum Specialists, State Mathematics Specialists and consultants will assemble a team to design professional development institutes to focus on the Common Core Standards for K-12 Mathematics. Tier One Institutes will begin by June 2011.

Activity 3b: State Mathematics Specialists and consultants will align, revise, and/or expand current K-8, and Algebra/Geometry Mathematics professional development institutes. Tier Two Institutes will be revised to ensure alignment to the Common Core Mathematics Standards, NCTM's Focus in High School Mathematics: Reasoning and Sense Making, National Math Panel findings, 21st Century Learning Skills and explicit integration of STEM careers.

Activity 3c: Approximately 2500 elementary teachers are participating in a three-year training on Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) for Grades K-3. Training is currently being provided by consultants and participation is paid by the schools. Most teachers complete the first year of the

institute but most do not complete the final two years due to the lack of available funding. State funds are being utilized to provide training for teachers to become certified CGI trainers. In-state certified trainers will greatly reduce the cost of the training and allow for sustainability. Race to the Top funds will be utilized to increase the number of teachers in CGI training and to provide additional training for more certified CGI trainers in the State. The Tier Three Institute is designed to build the capacity of classroom teachers to provide focused instruction and reflect on the best methods to improving student learning through the use of formative assessments.

Activity 3d: Mathematical Thinking (MT) for Grades 4-8 Institute (Tier Three) is available on a smaller scale. Education cooperatives are pooling resources to provide four (4) regional opportunities. Race to the Top funding will provide opportunity for additional training sites and will increase the number of middle school that can participate. The State will allocate funding to provide training for future MT certified trainers when the certification training becomes available. Developing certified trainers in the State for MT reduces the training costs and will provide the opportunity for sustaining the mathematics professional development opportunities with State professional development funds.

Activity 3e: Tier Three CGI and MT Institutes focus on developing a deep understanding of number sense and algebraic thinking. To expand professional development opportunities to the other mathematical strands, a team of specialists and consultants will be assembled to create institutes for teachers expanding problem solving in the areas of measurement, geometry, and data analysis. The Tier Three institutes will provide teachers an opportunity to explore and deepen their content knowledge and improve their instruction effectiveness.

Institute participants will receive continuous on-site instructional coaching and technical support from the State mathematics specialists. The utilization of professional learning communities will be encouraged to develop teacher leaders in each school district. All materials are available online to Arkansas educators. The institutes will evaluate the implementation of strategies and the progress in student achievement. Consultants will train the State mathematics specialists as trainers so that the institutes may be sustained. State and federal funds will be utilized to sustain the mathematics institutes.

Activity Four: Expand English Language Learner (ELL) professional development opportunities for teachers in Grades K-12.

The current Arkansas ELL Academies provide targeted, professional learning and the opportunity for participants to earn college credit and an ELL endorsement on their teaching license, as noted in D(3). With Race to the Top funding, regional consultants will be hired to provide coaching for implementation of research-based strategies. The consultants will also work with the literacy, math, and science teams to include ELL strategies in tiered professional development opportunities.

Activity Five: Expand on-line professional development opportunities.

RFQ will be posted to identify on-line courses that support literacy, mathematics, science and ELL. On-line courses will be aligned to the content areas and will be identified in the electronic instructional improvement system (IIS) (see activity six). The IIS will prescribe suggested courses for additional learning based on student data, teacher/principal evaluation, and professional growth plans. Race to the Top funding will provide a larger selection of courses for better differentiation. Access will be made available to Early Childhood and University colleagues. Federal and State funding will be utilized to sustain on-line courses.

Activity Six: Create a customized, electronic **instructional improvement system (IIS)** that includes curriculum and instruction design and support, assessment design of and for learning, student achievement data collection and analysis, teacher and principal evaluation, and professional growth and learning.

The system will offer dashboard accessibility to all teachers to curriculum documents, instructional tools including unit and lesson plans and supporting video streaming, assessment design of formative and common assessment, data collection and analysis, and prescriptive suggestions of on-line and State provided professional development, as noted in C(3).

Arkansas will seek a software-based IIS that supports our Race to the Top application. The IIS must meet a prescribe list of specifications and include all of the capabilities and functionality required to meet the State's goals.

Arkansas's IIS will allow for customization of features to be added to the system to include the State's longitudinal data system (SLDS), Arkansas IDEAS (Arkansas's on-line professional development portal), and others based on criteria determined by the ADE. Also, the IIS will allow

for customization of features to permit student access levels with unique student identification numbers. The teacher-student interaction feature will be comprised of four main components: Assessment engine, Writing engine, Digital Instruction, and a Community of Learning Portal.

1. The assessment engine portion of the program that will enable classroom teachers to quickly build and assign custom assessments that are tied to the State frameworks to students and will provide students with immediate feedback on assessment items, each identified by a particular student learning expectation. As this program will be tied to the State's existing data systems and each teacher and student will have a unique id, it will be possible to track individual student's performance.
2. The writing component will allow teachers to assign and grade writing prompts and will allow them to share prompts, grading rubrics and resources statewide with other teachers. Student performance over time will be tracked electronically. Additionally the system will utilize peer-review – student essays will first go out anonymously to any number of students in a particular class for grading and comment based on a teacher created grading rubric before going to the teacher for final review. Involving student in the grading process will ensure their understanding of performance expectation for the National Standards.
3. The Digital Instruction component will seamlessly connect existing State resources to this system based on State frameworks. For example, a student struggling with measurement concepts can directly link to a tutorial on the subject on the State's ADE on iTunes U site or other such resource. Students and teachers alike will be encouraged to create and submit related content to sites such as ADE on iTunes U.
4. The fourth component will be the development of a community of learning around this system. This will be facilitated through both a student and teacher forum to be divided further into subsections based on grade and content area. Here ideas and questions can be discussed and shared in a searchable format.

Activity Seven: Expand professional development opportunities that enable schools to implement positive behavioral supports and interventions.

Race to the Top funding will allow for positive behavioral support consultants to be housed regionally in the State and provide professional learning opportunities and on-site coaching and technical support based on the State's RTI model to close the achievement gap. These regional consultants will guide school's Tier I implementation of necessary core organizational structures and utilization of school wide proactive practices that promote appropriate student behaviors.

Implementation of positive behavioral supports practices in Arkansas schools will result in safe and secure school environments which maximize student's instructional engagement. Beyond these broadly focused school-wide efforts, the regional consultants will also provide schools learning opportunities and on-site coaching and technical assistance in developing Tier II and III strategic interventions for groups of students or specific students whose behavior or social / emotional functioning is impeding their academic engagement and progress. Positive behavior support consultants will work with administrators, teachers, and students to promote their skills, competencies, and responsiveness to cultural and student diversity thereby building collaborative learning environments. Professional development will include all components and implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS).

Activity Eight: Expand capacity for technical support/ technology.

A team of expert technology educators will be assembled to provide support to all training groups for the development of customized training materials and on-line supporting courses and documents. This team will consist of technical writers, experts in the field of professional learning and adult learning theory, and technology experts in the field of on-line web-based experiences. They will ensure the incorporation of 21st Century Learning Skills in all trainings and supporting documents. This work will allow for customized training opportunities to be shared on Arkansas IDEAS, ADE on iTunesU and with other States.

(D)(5)(ii) Measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of those supports in order to improve student achievement

National research suggests that while compensation is important in recruiting and retaining effective teachers, it is not the only or even the most important factor. The conditions under which teachers' work can play a much more vital role in their decision to remain in teaching. This is particularly true for those teachers in challenging situations. Education partners in Arkansas piloted a study in 2007 that was sponsored by the Research and Advocacy Network, the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, the Arkansas School Boards Association and the Arkansas Education Association. The pilot provided five primary findings:

1. Teacher working conditions can be important predictors of student achievement.
2. Teacher working conditions can make a difference in teacher retention.
3. Leadership is critical to improving working conditions.
4. Many aspects of working conditions have a "ripple effect" and improving one domain will have a positive carry over to other domains.
5. Focusing on working conditions is a cost effective strategy to develop schools of the 21st century.

The Arkansas Department of Education will use the Race to the Top opportunity to build on this pilot and commission a full study on teaching and learning conditions in the State. In order to measure, evaluate and continuously improve, we must know from where we are starting. The purpose for this study is to: (1) ensure that the State does what it can to provide the professional development necessary to leaders in the area of improved teaching and learning conditions, and (2) to ensure that these conditions in our schools do not prohibit the overall success that can come from the implementation of Arkansas's Race to the Top plans.

Also, using the performance measure indicators below, the State will develop a system to measure and evaluate its professional development suite and make adjustments where and when necessary to continuously improve the effectiveness of the supports provided.

Performance Measures Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.	Actual Data:	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
(Enter measures here, if any.)					
Leadership Actual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Leadership Institutes are provided in limited locations. • Leadership Support Specialists are available to the State-Directed schools as paid consultants • Various on-line professional development courses are available on ArkansasIDEAS 2010-2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Institutes will be available regionally. • Leadership Support Specialists will be hired, trained and assigned to regional teams. The specialists will provide on-going professional development, coaching and technical support to identified schools. • RFQ will be released for customized, on-line leadership professional development aligned to the ISLLC standards and Arkansas Teacher and Principal evaluation systems 2011-2012 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Institutes will continue regionally. The institutes will be evaluated based on data from the implementation rubric. Revisions will be made as deemed necessary. • Leadership Support Specialists will continue to work with assigned schools. The specialists will be evaluated based on the Arkansas Leadership Academy (ALA) leadership rubric and progress of assigned schools. • On-line leadership professional development will be available on ArkansasIDEAS. Leadership Support Specialists will provide on-site training and support to school leaders in the 					

<p>utilization of the on-line leadership modules for differentiation of learning.</p> <p>2012-2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Institutes will continue regionally. The institutes will be evaluated based on data from the implementation rubric. Revisions will be made as deemed necessary. • Leadership Support Specialists will continue to work with assigned schools. The specialists will be evaluated based on the Arkansas Leadership Academy (ALA) leadership rubric and progress of assigned schools. • On-line leadership professional development will be available on ArkansasIDEAS. Leadership Support Specialists will provide on-site training and support to school leaders in the utilization of the on-line leadership modules for differentiation of learning. Evaluation of the on-line leadership courses will be conducted annually by the On-Line Advisory Committee. The committee will review participation and perceptual data to determine the impact on school processes and student achievement. <p>2013-2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Institutes will continue regionally. The institutes will be evaluated based on data from the implementation rubric. Revisions will be made as deemed necessary. • Leadership Support Specialists will continue to work with assigned schools. The specialists will be evaluated based on the Arkansas Leadership Academy (ALA) leadership rubric and progress of assigned schools. • On-line leadership professional development will be available on ArkansasIDEAS. Leadership Support Specialists will provide on-site training and support to school leaders in the utilization of the on-line leadership modules for differentiation of learning. Evaluation of the on-line leadership courses will be conducted annually by the On-Line Advisory Committee. The committee will review participation and perceptual data to determine the impact on school processes and student achievement. 					
<p>Teaching and Learning</p> <p>Actual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Tier Two Institutes are currently available K-12. • Science Tier Two Institutes are currently available for grades 5, 					

<p>7, and Biology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics Tier Two Institutes are currently available for Grades 3-8. Tier Three Institutes (CGI and MT) are available on a limited basis. • ELL Academies are available each summer. • Various on-line professional development courses are available on ArkansasIDEAS. • Various electronic systems operate individually within the State. • Through the SIG and now SPDG grant, two positive behavioral support consultants are working in Arkansas. <p>2010-2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Tier One Institutes will be developed. Trainers will be trained and supporting materials will be available electronically. • Science Tier Two Institutes will be developed to include grades K-12. Trainers will be trained and supporting materials will be available electronically. • Mathematics Tier One Institutes will be developed. Trainers will be trained and supporting materials will be available electronically. • ELL consultants will be assigned to schools in school improvement that have identified ELL subpopulation. • RFQ for additional on-line professional development courses to include content areas, ELL, school reform and systems change. The On-line Advisory Council will oversee the needs assessment and course selection. • RFQ for a customized IIS. • Positive behavioral support consultants will be assigned to regional schools. <p>2011-2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Tier One and Tier Two Institutes will be available regionally. Evaluation of these professional development opportunities will be based on participant knowledge and skills and impact on student achievement. • Literacy Tier Three Institutes will be developed. Trainers will be trained and supporting materials will be available electronically. 					
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Tier One Institutes will be developed (if Common Standards are available). Trainers will be trained and supporting materials will be available electronically. • Mathematics Tier One and Tier Two Institutes will be available regionally. Evaluation of these professional development opportunities will be based on participant knowledge and skills and impact on student achievement. • Mathematics Tier Three Institutes will be developed. Trainers will be trained and supporting materials will be available electronically. • ELL consultants will continue to support identified schools. Evaluation of these consultants will be based on change in school processes and impact on student achievement. • On-line professional development courses will be available on ArkansasIDEAS. Opportunities will include content areas, ELL, school reform and systems change. Evaluation of the on-line courses will be conducted annually by the On-Line Advisory Committee. The committee will review participation and perceptual data to determine the impact on school processes and student achievement. • The Arkansas IIS system will be customized to merge existing data programs. Additional customized programs will be developed as needed to meet the needs of parents, students, teachers, administrators, State department and shareholders. • Positive behavioral support consultants will continue to support identified schools. Evaluation of these consultants will be based on change in school processes and impact on student achievement. 						
<p>2012-2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Tier One, Tier Two and Tier Three Institutes will be available regionally. Evaluation of these professional development opportunities will be based on participant knowledge and skills and impact on student achievement. • Science Tier One and Tier Two Institutes will be available regionally. Evaluation of these professional development opportunities will be based on participant knowledge and skills and impact on student achievement. • Science Tier Three Institutes will be developed. Trainers will be trained and supporting materials will be available electronically. 						

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics Tier One, Tier Two and Tier Three Institutes will be available regionally. Evaluation of these professional development opportunities will be based on participant knowledge and skills and impact on student achievement. • ELL consultants will continue to support identified schools. Evaluation of these consultants will be based on change in school processes and impact on student achievement. • On-line professional development courses will be available on ArkansasIDEAS. Opportunities will include content areas, ELL, school reform and systems change. Evaluation of the on-line courses will be conducted annually by the On-Line Advisory Committee. The committee will review participation and perceptual data to determine the impact on school processes and student achievement. • The Arkansas IIS system will be available to parents, students, teachers, administrators, State department and shareholders. Professional learning and coaching will be available to schools to ensure appropriate use of the IIS to enhance data-driven decision making. Evaluation of the IIS will be based on school process changes and impact on student achievement. • Positive behavioral support consultants will continue to support identified schools. Evaluation of these consultants will be based on change in school processes and impact on student achievement. 					
<p>2013-2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy, Mathematics, and Science Tier One, Tier Two and Tier Three Institutes will be available regionally. Evaluation of these professional development opportunities will be based on participant knowledge and skills and impact on student achievement. • ELL consultants will continue to support identified schools. Evaluation of these consultants will be based on change in school processes and impact on student achievement. • On-line professional development courses will be available on ArkansasIDEAS. Opportunities will include content areas, ELL, school reform and systems change. Evaluation of the on-line courses will be conducted annually by the On-Line Advisory Committee. The committee will review participation and perceptual data to determine the impact on school processes and student achievement. • The Arkansas IIS system will be available to parents, students, 					

<p>teachers, administrators, State department and shareholders. Professional learning and coaching will be available to schools to ensure appropriate use of the IIS to enhance data-driven decision making. Evaluation of the IIS will be based on school process changes and impact on student achievement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive behavioral support consultants will continue to support identified schools. Evaluation of these consultants will be based on change in school processes and impact on student achievement. 					
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(E) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools (50 total points)

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs (10 points)

The extent to which the State has the legal, statutory, or regulatory authority to intervene directly in the State’s persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) and in LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action status.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (E)(1):

- (c) A description of the State’s applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.

Recommended maximum response length: One page

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) is one of nine States receiving approval from the United States Department of Education (USDoE) to be part of the Differentiated Accountability Pilot. Arkansas’s approved Differentiated Accountability Model, “Smart Accountability,” was granted under section 9401 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This pilot provides the

State with the opportunity to explore ways to match school improvement research-based interventions that correlate to the academic reasons that led to a school's identification for improvement. Also, this flexibility allows the State to be directive in the interventions necessary for the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools or "high-priority schools." Smart Accountability allows Arkansas to identify a more nuanced way to grade schools so that chronically underperforming schools have much tougher measures and episodic and non-trending underperformance have a more measured approach which this section later shows.

The State has demonstrated a strong commitment to student achievement; however, after several years of implementing No Child Left Behind (NCLB), many of the State's schools are in some stage of school improvement. Some are achieving with their students across the board except in one subpopulation while others are failing with students across the whole population. Smart Accountability allows the State to distinguish among schools by applying different labels, interventions and consequences to schools appropriate to their actual school improvement status based on the Arkansas Benchmark Assessment. This system, divides our 1094 schools into "achieving", "targeted" or "whole school" improvement statuses and "State directed" based on the following criteria:

Label	Selection Criteria
Achieving Schools	<p>Meets Standards</p> <p><i>In 2009, 498 (46%) schools were classified as Achieving (176 (16%) were classified in Alert status – missing AYP for one year).</i></p>
Targeted Improvement	<p>Schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress in math and/or literacy and miss the annual measurable goal (AMO) for <u>25 percent or fewer groups</u> and <u>do not miss the AMO for combined population</u> resulting in school improvement years one through three (1-3) will be labeled as in "Targeted Improvement"</p> <p>TI-1, TI-2 and TI-3 Corrective Action</p> <p><i>In 2009, 140 (13%) schools were classified in Targeted Improvement.</i></p>
Whole School Improvement	<p>Schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress in math and/or literacy and miss the AMO for combined population and/or <u>more than 25 percent of groups</u> resulting in school improvement years one through three (1-3) will be labeled as in "Whole School Improvement"</p> <p>WSI-1, WSI-2 and WSI-3 Corrective Action</p> <p><i>In 2009, 113 (10%) schools were classified in Whole School Improvement.</i></p>

Targeted Intensive Improvement	<p>Schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress in math and/or literacy and miss the AMO for <u>25 percent or fewer groups</u> and <u>do not miss the AMO</u> for combined population resulting in school improvement for four (4) or more years will be labeled as in "Targeted Intensive Improvement"</p> <p>TII-4, TII-5: Restructuring <i>In 2009, 32 (3%) schools were classified in Targeted Intensive Improvement.</i></p>
Whole School Intensive Improvement	<p>Schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress in math and/or literacy and miss the AMO for combined population and/or <u>more than 25 percent groups</u> resulting in school improvement years four (4) or more years will be labeled as in "Whole School Intensive Improvement"</p> <p>WSII-4, WSII-5: Restructuring <i>In 2009, 64 (6%) schools were classified in Whole School Intensive Improvement.</i></p>
State Directed	<p>Schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress in math and/or literacy after TI-5 or WSII-5 will be labeled as in "State Directed" status</p> <p><i>In 2009, 58 (5%) schools were classified in State Directed status. (Some of these schools are seeing growth in their students but have been in school improvement for more than 5 years.)</i></p>

This classification system allows the State to collaboratively support and directly intervene, if necessary, to assist schools struggling to meet the academic needs of their students. For example, if an LEA is placed in State Directed status, the Commissioner of Education may assign a School Improvement (SI) Director to oversee the administration of the school(s) learning environment. Smart Accountability enhances efforts mandated by State law regarding accountability and school improvement. The more significant pieces include Act 1467 of 2003 and Act 35 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003.

Act 1467 of 2003 (*see Attachment E-1*), commonly referred to as "The Omnibus Quality Education Act" authorizes the State Board of Education and/or the Commissioner of Education to intervene when a school district fails to meet State accreditation standards or when it meets the criteria for placement in academic distress. These interventions range from State-provided technical assistance to State takeover of the district with removal of the superintendent and/or school board.

Act 35 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003 (*see Attachment E-2*) creates and mandates the State's academic standards and accountability system by requiring content standards, outlining required assessments, dictating the State's accountability system which includes a "status" and a "gains" model, and outlining required professional development for teachers and administrators.

Reform Plan Criteria

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools (40 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Identify the persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) and, at its discretion, any non-Title I eligible secondary schools that would be considered persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) if they were eligible to receive Title I funds; and (5 points)

(ii) Support its LEAs in turning around these schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models (as described in Appendix C): turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model (provided that an LEA with more than nine persistently lowest-achieving schools may not use the transformation model for more than 50 percent of its schools). (35 points)

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (E)(2) (please fill in table below):

- The State's historic performance on school turnaround, as evidenced by the total number of persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) that States or LEAs attempted to turn around in the last five years, the approach used, and the results and lessons learned to date.

Recommended maximum response length: Eight pages

E(2)(i): Identify the persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) and, at its discretion, any non-Title I eligible secondary schools that would be considered persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) if they were eligible to receive Title I funds.

Identification of persistently low performing schools

The annual school performance data from the Arkansas assessments required under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA for literacy and mathematics were used to identify persistently lowest-achieving schools. Performance levels from annual assessments for 2007 through 2009 included all students completing a full academic year, as well as students completing an alternate assessment. Tier 1 schools identified as persistently lowest-achieving were determined from among 279 Title I participating schools that were in school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

1. Schools were ranked based on 2009 academic achievement for mathematics and literacy combined using an added ranks method.
 - a. Schools were sorted from highest to lowest for the percentage of students proficient in mathematics in 2009. Each school was assigned a rank based on this order with 1 representing the highest ranked performance.
 - b. Schools were sorted from highest to lowest for the percentage of students proficient in literacy in 2009. Each school was assigned a rank based on this order with 1 representing the highest ranked performance.
 - c. An overall rank for 2009 academic achievement was obtained by summing the ranks for mathematics and literacy.
2. Schools were ranked on progress by utilizing the added ranks method for 2007, 2008, and 2009 performance.
 - a. Schools were sorted from highest to lowest for percentage of students proficient in mathematics for 2007 and 2008. Each school was assigned a rank based on this order for each year, with 1 representing the highest ranked performance.
 - b. Schools were sorted from highest to lowest for percentage of students proficient in literacy for 2007 and 2008. Each school was assigned a rank based on this order for each year, with 1 representing the highest ranked performance.
 - c. Overall ranks for 2007 and 2008 were obtained by summing the ranks for mathematics and literacy.
 - d. A 3 year progress ranking was obtained by summing the 2007, 2008, and 2009 rank values.
3. A final combined ranking was obtained by summing the weighted rankings for 2009 academic achievement and 3 year progress. Three year progress was weighted 1.0 and 2009 academic achievement was weighted 0.80.
4. The schools identified as persistently lowest-achieving were the bottom 14 schools when sorted by the final combined ranking. These schools had the 14 highest values for the final combined ranking.

Tier 2 schools were identified from among 46 Title 1 eligible secondary schools using the same method as Tier 1 schools. The bottom 2 schools (5 percent of 46 schools) had the highest final combined ranking values.

It is possible that a school is on Arkansas's list of persistently low performing schools and is not currently in "State Directed" status. This is because a school can have a lack of growth in student achievement, but may not have been in school improvement for six years or more.

E(2)(ii): Support its LEAs in turning around these schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models (as described in Appendix C): turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model.

In 2009, the State took a bold step in its efforts to turn around low performing schools by implementing Arkansas's Differentiated Accountability plan (Smart Accountability). However, the State received no additional funding to provide intensive support.

Race to the Top, along with the School Improvement Grants (SIG), will provide the necessary resources to turn around the State's lowest performing schools by not only building on Smart Accountability, but helping schools take the courageous steps of implementing the models of school turnaround, closure or restart. Also, by developing a new model for determining the growth of our students (D(2)(i)) and using that data to provide professional development and interventions, Arkansas can ensure all students have the support they need to be successful.

Overall, the State does have the expectation that all kids will go to school in an environment that prepares them for college and careers. However, some students struggle to meet the challenges before them and are not learning at the levels necessary to prepare them for the 21st century. It is the responsibility of the State to ensure all schools are providing this necessary learning environment. When schools will not, or simply cannot, meet this expectation then bold action and support are necessary on behalf of the students.

The purpose of Smart Accountability is not just turn-around low performing schools and to stop other schools from going down the same path, but also to change the culture of how the State provides support to these schools and districts. The State reorganized the units within the Department of Education to better coordinate support to schools and partnered with the education cooperatives and STEM centers to provide focused professional development and on-site technical support to schools

identified in Smart Accountability. The fact that Arkansas is a rural State brings on additional challenges, especially when it comes to replacing significant numbers of staff. Instead of making excuses for the challenges, Arkansas has committed through Smart Accountability, and now through the opportunities and additional resources provided in Race to the Top, to implementing the various restructuring and intervention options available. Arkansas has already started to build capacity through the use of State support teams comprised of expert educators across the State. The interventions through Smart Accountability, (See *Appendix E-3*) greatly mirror the four school intervention models provided in this application: turnaround model, restart model, school closure, and the transformation model.

Goal:

To successfully implement appropriate intervention models in Arkansas's persistently low-performing schools.

If Arkansas is provided with a Race to the Top grant, the State will be able to accelerate its work with the schools identified as persistently low performing and their LEA. The LEA and school, with the State's assistance, will make a determination as to the best intervention model to implement. Due to the rural nature of the State, the turnaround model presents a few additional challenges than the others because of the 50 percent teacher turnover requirement. However, the State is committed to implementing any and all of the four intervention models.

Arkansas has significant experience in closing and consolidating LEAs because of enrollment factors and could quickly assist schools who choose the closure option. Financial transfer preparation, partnership development, transitional planning and other services will be provided to LEAs that choose this option for their persistently low performing school.

The Arkansas Department of Education's Charter School Office and partners, such as the Arkansas Public School Resource Center (an organization committed to working with charter and rural schools in Arkansas), will provide excellent assistance to schools that choose the restart model. The State will also build partnerships with outside charter or education management organization that will be available to assist LEAs with this effort.

If an LEA does not choose the above three intervention options, the State will require the school to implement the transformational model. The State understands that the transformation model, while

one of four models accepted by the US Department of Education (USDOE), is often the least preferred for schools that chronically underperform on the State's assessments. The same holds true for schools that fall into Arkansas's State Directed category. Practically, for those rural schools falling in this State Directed category, they are usually the only elementary or middle school in their small rural town. Closure of the school does not provide alternate options as the nearest school is miles away in another town, even if such an agreement with that town could be brokered. As stated previously, the turnaround model also presents challenges in trying to find 50% or more new teachers willing to work in a small, isolated town. Restart models also have the challenge of recruiting charter operators to rural locations because of the strategic nature of the location and the inability to attract a qualified talent pool. Hence, for those non-urban, rural schools on our persistently low performing list, the transformation model is the only model of practical choice. It is not a case of lack of political will, but lack of practical capacity that necessitates the transformation model.

The benefit of this transformation model in Arkansas however is that it builds on, and puts resources behind, the State's Smart Accountability plan (specifically the State Directed) that started in the 2009-10 school year. This model reflects the need for States and LEAs to work together to provide the professional learning opportunities and for communities to "build their own" capacity for success. This is not to say that principals and teachers should not be replaced after given the time for growth; however, the opportunities for improvement must first be presented in a systemic, intensive and embedded approach to build leadership and local capacity.

The elements in the Transformational Model that do not exist in Smart Accountability or current Arkansas law will be addressed in detail in the LEA final Race to the Top Scope of Work. Each school has different needs and therefore the State (or a designee of the State) will work with each individually to determine how implementation will occur. The elements that will be considered that are not a part of Arkansas's current work include:

- Implementing strategies such as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions for school leaders, teachers and other staff who have increased student achievement and high school graduation rates.
- Instituting a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development.

- Ensuring that the persistently low performing school is not required to accept a teacher without the mutual consent of the teacher and principal, regardless of the teacher or principal's seniority.

Together, the Race to the Top grant and the School Improvement Grants (SIG) will allow the State to accelerate the Smart Accountability timeline and build the capacity of teachers and principals in persistently low performing schools. The SIG funds will be focused on building instructional capacity specifically within the school building itself, although Race to the Top begins some of those efforts. SIG will allow schools to support teachers and staff with the latest research approaches and opportunities to improving student achievement. Race to the Top will focus on building the infrastructure, leadership and support capacity primarily at the State, Education Cooperates meeting tomorrow and LEA levels since bringing successful programs or change opportunities to scale is always a challenge for States and especially individual LEAs. The Race to the Top grant will allow Arkansas to support its persistently low performing schools by expanding successful programs and building the human capacity for change.

In an effort to ensure successful implementation of the transformational model, persistently low performing schools will receive \$750,000 during the first year of implementation. Then the schools will only receive the additional \$750,000 (per year) for years two through four if they demonstrate to the School Improvement Director that student growth is happening according to the Smart Accountability data. If in the absence of such as demonstration, the School Improvement Director can direct the school into one of the other three intervention models or make a recommendation to the Commissioner to consider whether the school should be subject to more severe State action under Act 1467 of 2003.

Each persistently low performing school that chooses the transformational model (or the turnaround model) must develop their intervention plan to include the following activities. These activities align with various priority initiatives of the State for ensuring all students are ready for college and careers.

Activities: Increase Teacher and School Leader Effectiveness and Comprehensive instructional reform strategies

Building State and LEA Capacity

Arkansas is supporting a rapid turnaround of schools; therefore, additional personnel will be needed at the State and regional levels to provide intensive, on-site support of reform strategies. A State Improvement Director will coordinate this effort and will oversee the work of six Professional Development Specialists and fourteen School Improvement Directors. The State Improvement Director will report to the Arkansas Department of Education's (ADE) Smart Accountability Director (current position).

The six Professional Development Specialists (elementary and high school specialists in mathematics and literacy) will be assigned to work with the school-based Instructional Facilitators to provide differentiated professional learning and coaching to classroom teachers. Also, a full-time School Improvement Director will be assigned to each of the 14 identified persistently low performing schools that choose the turn-around or transformational model. Their responsibility is to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the interventions and to supervise the instructional facilitators and leadership coach to ensure a seamless, coherent intervention strategy.

Through the School Improvement Grant (1003g funds), each persistently low performing school will also ensure that one full-time math and one full-time literacy instructional facilitator (see D2 for Instructional Facilitators initiative), as well as one Leadership Support Coach (see guidelines in D(5)) are in place (per 300 students) to provide on-site coaching and facilitate professional learning focused on improving instructional practices by using data-driven decision-making and other differentiated areas identified by observation. Some schools have implemented several "interventions" without a systemic plan detailing how everything works together to meet the goal of increased student achievement.

Schools will provide additional professional learning time for all educators to ensure adequate time is available to learn and master instructional practices. Teachers and principals will participate in Professional Development Institutes based on differentiated needs (as noted in Section D(5)). Additional job-embedded learning will be facilitated by the Instructional Facilitators to include professional learning communities (see Professional Learning Teams below) that meet regularly to examine student work and develop instructional practices and common formative assessments.

Leadership teams will meet regularly with the principal, Leadership Support Coach, and School Improvement Director to monitor the progress and make data-driven decisions about school processes and student achievement.

The State Improvement Director, Professional Development Specialists, School Improvement Directors, Instructional Facilitators, and Leadership Support Coaches will receive intensive professional development both from Professional Development Institutes (as noted in D(5)) and on-going job-embedded professional learning. Additional professional learning support will be provided by the Arkansas Leadership Academy (ALA), Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), universities and consultants to ensure the team has the expertise and on-going support in reform efforts of low performing schools.

Hierarchy for Intensive Support for Lowest Performing Schools:

- State Improvement Director (1)
 - Professional Development Specialists
 - School Improvement Directors (school based)
 - ◆ Leadership Support Coach
 - ◆ Instructional Facilitators (math and literacy coaches)

Professional Learning Teams

As the State conducted community meetings and solicited input into the Race to the Top application, ensuring successful learning communities in every school was a recurring theme, especially the lowest performing schools. Through the Race to the Top grant, Arkansas proposes a learning community's initiative with the expressed goal to improve student learning by improving teacher education and teacher knowledge through the development of learning teams or professional development communities in those schools. Some schools may already have professional learning teams and as such, this initiative can bring support and resources into the school to fully align its implementation.

A professional learning team concept, utilizing college and university professors and students along side school teachers and leaders, has been successfully implemented by joint efforts of University of Arkansas at Little Rock faculty with school personnel. For this initiative UALR would serve as the

lead institution offering learning communities training and collaboratively working with other interested institutions in conjunction with The Learning Teams approach developed by Ron Gallimore, William Saunders, Claude Goldenberg and others (Gallimore, Ermeling, Saunders., & Goldenberg, 2009; <http://pearsonlt.com/>). The key to this approach is to closely link the pre-service education of teachers and other school professionals with school-based efforts to improve teaching and student learning in the State's lowest performing schools. To be successful, this effort will involve the coordination of partnerships across Institutions of Higher Educations (IHE's), LEAs, schools, and other important entities and institutions..

Each participating institution, beginning with two to four institutions (in the areas of our lowest performing schools) in the first year would commit to place a critical mass of its field and internship candidates at school sites in common, elementary, middle and secondary school sites. The agreement of the partner schools would be crucial and therefore the MOU by superintendents and principals is key. School Counselor candidates and principal candidates would also participate as part of their internships by working with faculty/staff at the partner schools. It is projected that each IHE would partner with at least 3 high priority schools during the initial year and that during the four years of the Race to the Top grant, additional schools would be added. It is understood that the Colleges of Education would continue their other pathways to teaching with other candidates being placed in field and internship experiences in other schools/settings and that a comparative study will be undertaken by each IHE to determine gains by students and professional development provided to faculty by virtue of the more intense presence of Higher Education faculty, external support and candidates from initial and advanced programs in those schools. Joint professional development involving faculty from the IHE and school faculty will be key to the development of learning communities as will joint data gathering and analysis.

The professional learning team initiative at each school will be coordinated by the Leadership Support Coach.

National Board Take One! Initiative (or like model)

Arkansas ranks ninth nationwide in the number of new National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) in 2009 and ranks 16th in the total number of teachers who achieved certification over time. Arkansas showed a 6.4 percent increase in the number of teachers who achieved National Board Certification

in 2009 over last year. This brings the total of National Board Certified Teachers in Arkansas to 1,397.

With this success, Arkansas is very interested in bringing this kind of high-quality professional development into the buildings of our persistently low performing schools. In order to build the human capital in these schools, teachers and principals will be able to participate in the *National Board Take One! Initiative* as catalysts for creating school improvements.

Although this program will not be mandated for our persistently low performing schools (other like quality and systemic programs can be used), through *Take One!*, teachers and principals will experience powerful professional development and engage in new types of reflection on their practice. Some teachers may choose to continue on with full candidacy.

Teacher participants in the *Take One!* process will work with NBCT facilitators to: set goals for student learning based on data gathered from a variety of formative and summative assessments; select appropriate instructional strategies for students to meet goals based on national and State standards; link instructional strategies to students' progress, analyze instructional context to confirm and revise goals; think critically and communicate within school-based teams about planning appropriate instruction for particular students, groups, and the whole class based on achievement toward goals; analyze videotapes to show evidence of accomplished teaching; draft a written analysis of teaching and learning shown on videotapes; reflect on effectiveness of instruction to determine next steps; and revise instruction based on formative and summative assessments.

Through this program, principals will also receive extensive, focused training to develop leadership skills. They would make a three year commitment to complete the appropriate leadership training and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards certification process and advance whole school reform at their schools. The leadership training, run by Arkansas State partners, will enable principals to participate in sustained on-going, job-embedded professional development focused on supporting learning communities within the school to increase student achievement. Principals will extend their knowledge and skills in five leadership performance areas: 1) Creating and living the mission, vision, and beliefs, 2) Developing deep knowledge about teaching and learning, 3) Building and maintaining collaborative relationships, 4) Leading and managing change, 5) Building and sustaining accountability systems.

Again, this professional development will be coordinated at each school through the Leadership Support Coach.

Expanding Jobs for Arkansas Graduates

Each persistently low performing middle and high school will hire a Jobs for Arkansas Graduates (JAG) employee (unless already employed) through their Race to the Top funds who will focus on teaching job readiness skills to high-need youth and increasing the ability of those young people to earn a high school diploma. JAG, a State affiliate of Jobs for American's Graduates, distinguishes itself in that services are delivered for course credit within the public school system during the school day. The curriculum, designed to help students master employability competencies, remediate in academic subjects and formulate strategies for gaining entry to postsecondary institutions and employment is delivered by teachers who are employed by a participating LEA. JAG teachers also log significantly higher levels and more consistent contact hours with each participant, ranging from a minimum of 180 up to 720 hours. The model must be implemented to national standards at each site and is held accountable through an annual accreditation process.

With Arkansas's focus on ensuring all student graduate college and career ready, all persistently low performing middle and high schools will hire a JAG teacher to help their students who have multiple barriers to success that include personal, academic and employment. The lack of trained employees in the State of Arkansas was once cited by Toyota Motor Company as one of the deciding factors for not opening a Toyota plant in Arkansas. Developing a JAG Network for middle and high school students will provide potential employers with a pool of employees trained in both academics and job skills. The Arkansas Chamber of Commerce stated Arkansas's K-12 educational system generally does not address the trainable needs in industry. JAG graduates directly address industry needs by placing students on actual job sites and following the graduate one year after graduation to assess the student's progress in their present environment. The JAG teacher will be supervised by the principal of the school.

Compensation Study & Pilot

As mentioned in Section D (2), Arkansas is committed to a strong accountability system for student performance and school improvement. As we move forward in our educational reform efforts, we must develop a comprehensive differentiated compensation plan for principals and teachers. Please see Section D (2) for more information on this study and pilot.

Activities: Increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools

Focus on the Whole Child

Schools by themselves cannot, and should not be expected to, address the nation's most serious health and social problems. Families, health care workers, the media, religious organizations, community organizations that serve youth, and young people themselves also must be systematically involved. However, schools can provide a critical capacity in which many agencies might work together to maintain the well-being of young people. Although the State has made the working with the "whole child" a priority through legislation (*see Appendix E-4*), the State, regional and LEA capacity often struggles to provide targeted assistance to schools in those areas such as coordinated school health and out-of-school opportunities. This focus and the resources behind it can effectively help the "whole child," which will lead to increased student achievement especially in our persistently low performing schools.

Arkansas's Coordinated School Health (CSH) Initiative has proven to be an effective system designed to connect health (physical, mental/emotional and social) with education. This coordinated approach improves students' health and their capacity to learn through the support of families, communities and schools working together. By definition all Coordinated School Health components work together to improve the lives of students and their families. Although these components are listed separately, it is their composite that allows CSH to have significant impact. The eight components of CSH include: health education, physical education/physical activity; health services; nutrition services; health promotion for staff; counseling and psychological services; healthy school environment; student/parent/community involvement.

Extended learning time is defined by the Afterschool Alliance as "innovative and effective approaches including implementing afterschool, before school and/or summer learning programs and/or lengthening the school day, week or year." Arkansas has made a commitment to develop high quality standards around the issue of out-of-school opportunities. In 2009, The Governor's Task Force on Best Practices for Afterschool and Summer Programs published a report called, "Enriching Arkansas Children's Lives Through High-Quality Out-Of-School Activities and The Demand for After-School Programs in Arkansas." The Task Force recommended that Arkansas take several actions to support expanded access to quality after-school and summer programs across the State (*see Appendix E-5*). Also, the Arkansas Out-of-School Network (AOSN) has an array of key partners who

have committed staff, resources and technical assistance to establishing and maintaining the network and promoting the statewide expansion and development of after-school programs.

Current CSH schools and those schools that have high quality extended learning opportunities in Arkansas have shown increases in school attendance, increases in graduation rates, and decreases in juvenile arrests. Students who attend these schools have improved self-esteem, increased health knowledge and health skills and a decrease in risky behavior. Therefore, through the Race to the Top opportunity, the State will require an investment within the persistently low performing schools to build the capacity for quality CSH and extended learning opportunities through such programs as AmeriCorps and City Year. The State will also use the School Improvement Grant opportunity to build on these programs.

Activities: Providing operational flexibility and sustained support

Scholastic Audits

The State's Smart Accountability plan is grounded in the Arkansas Standards and Indicators of School Improvement (see attached ACTAAP Section 9.12 in *(Appendix B-3)*). These standards, adapted from Kentucky, were approved by the Arkansas State Board of Education in 2006 and allow the assessment of systemic performance of a school by taking an evidence-based approach to three inclusive areas: (1) Academic Performance (curriculum, classroom evaluation and assessment, instruction); (2) Learning Environment (school culture, student/family/community structure, professional growth); and (3) Efficiency (leadership, organizational structure, comprehensive/effective planning). (Arkansas Department of Education Emergency Rules Governing the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program and the Arkansas Academic Distress Program).

Arkansas currently utilizes the scholastic audit process to conduct school-level diagnostic audits for those that have been identified as being in School Improvement year 3 and beyond. The scholastic audit school report, provided to the school after the audit is complete, offers successful, research-based intervention strategy recommendations to assist schools in improving student achievement and overall school performance.

Through Race to the Top, the State will accelerate the positive effects of this practice by expanding the number of trained educators in the scholastic audit process to help with the State's capacity

challenges; provide opportunities for LEAs to utilize self-assessments based on the scholastic audit model, and allow the State to perform scholastic audits on high performing schools.

The State has not been able to conduct all of the necessary audits of the schools in need. The numbers of schools that are chronically low performing continue to increase, and in multiple instances, this persists in spite of tireless efforts of school staff. As an agency, the goals of this program are not being met because of the State's financial and human capacity barriers.

Through Race to the Top, the State will build statewide capacity for conducting scholastic audits by expanding the use of consultants. The State will also pursue conducting a limited number of district scholastic audits for districts who have been identified as in district school improvement in an effort to focus on systemic change. The State capacity will increase and evolve over a three year period of time. Current Team Leaders (external to the Arkansas Department of Education) will participate by coaching the newly employed team leaders by: making on-site visits to schools, conducting audits, and finalizing the scholastic audit school reports. It is expected that by the end of year three ADE will have increased its capacity to conduct needed audits.

Although most of the State's persistently lowest achieving schools will already participate in a school audit provided by Arkansas law, the State understands that it is also necessary to put this assessment process in the hands of schools to build the capacity of school educators in understanding how implementation of research-based practices and systemic processes better meet the needs of their students and teachers.

Through the Race to the Top grant, funds will be available to allow the leadership teams in all schools, even those not served by the mandate of State law, to implement self-assessment audits to plan and monitor school change. The ADE will expand the Scholastic Audit unit by employing highly-skilled educators to provide the training, technical assistance and monitoring necessary to build the capacity of LEAs to implement the self-assessment audits with fidelity. These schools will be involved in on-going job embedded professional development in order to effectively utilize the audit process. The State will provide technical assistance and monitoring to ensure the audit process is fully functioning and that the findings are correct and are aligned to supportive evidence. On-site support from the School Improvement Directors will assist in developing long range improvement plans.

Finally, Race to the Top funds will provide the opportunity for Scholastic Audits of high-performing schools, thus providing models of effective practices. The State will use these results to draw audit comparisons between low and high performing schools. There will exist opportunities for professional development and mentoring to be offered by personnel in high performing schools (who may also be working in challenging environments) to their peers in lower performing schools.

Evidence for (E)(2) (please fill in table below):

- **The State's historic performance on school turnaround, as evidenced by the total number of persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) that States or LEAs attempted to turn around in the last five years, the approach used, and the results and lessons learned to date.**

Approach Used	# of Schools Since SY2004-05	Results and Lessons Learned
Transformational	52	<p>The Arkansas Department of Education contracted with America's Choice as the State's turnaround model to begin working with targeted schools during the 2006-07 school year. Since that time America's Choice has worked with a total of 52 schools. During the 2009-10 school year, America's Choice is working with a total of 39 schools in 17 districts. This means that there are 13 schools that have been served by America's Choice at one point in time who are no longer receiving services from America's Choice. The 13 schools that are no longer receiving services from America's Choice fit into the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 schools met their AMO for two consecutive years • 3 schools applied for and received a waiver from the Arkansas Department of Education • 2 schools were consolidated with another America's Choice school • 1 school was replaced with another school that was in greater need of services from America's Choice <p>The academic performance of each of these 52 schools has been evaluated by looking at the mean scale scores on the ACTAAP Assessments that were administered at each of the schools. The mean scale score for all students in the State was also considered to compare the growth of students in America's</p>

		<p>of these 52 schools compared to the State of Arkansas is listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 of the 52 schools showed more growth than the State of Arkansas for all grades in both math and literacy since the spring of 2006 • 12 of the 52 schools showed growth for all grades in both math and literacy, some of this growth exceeded the growth for the State while some of the growth was less than the State as whole • 34 of the 52 schools showed mixed results, meaning there was growth in some areas but there was at least one area where the mean scale score was lower in 2009 than it was in 2006 • 0 of the 52 schools showed a decline in the mean scale score for all grades in both math and literacy.
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Please see *Appendix E-6* for more information concerning the work of America's Choice.

Performance Measures	Actual Data:	End of SY 2010-	End of SY 2011-	End of SY 2012-	End of SY 2013-2014
The number of schools for which one of the four school intervention models (described in Appendix C) will be initiated each year.	0	7	4	3	ongoing

These measures are estimates. The State will work with each persistently low-performing school as we develop its detailed scope of work (within 90 days of receiving the grant award) to determine the timeline for implementation.

(F) General (55 total points)

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(F)(1) Making education funding a priority (10 points)

The extent to which—

(i) The percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2009 was greater than or equal to the percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2008; and

(ii) The State's policies lead to equitable funding (a) between high-need LEAs (as defined in this notice) and other LEAs, and (b) within LEAs, between high-poverty schools (as defined in this notice) and other schools.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (F)(1)(i):

- Financial data to show whether and to what extent expenditures, as a percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice), increased, decreased, or remained the same.

Evidence for (F)(1)(ii):

- Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

Recommended maximum response length: Three pages

(F)(1)(i) The percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2009 was greater than or equal to the percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2008.

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGE OF STATE FUNDING
K-12 AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>EDUCATION TOTAL</u>	<u>STATE TOTAL</u>	<u>% OF TOTAL</u>
<u>FY2008</u>			
GENERAL REVENUE FORECAST (FINAL)			
PUBLIC SCHOOL FUND	1,856,816,923		
GENERAL EDUCATION FUND	91,818,037		
TECHNICAL INSTITUTES	7,462,523		
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (FOUR YEAR)	572,959,263		
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (TWO) YEAR)	104,814,845		
TECHNICAL COLLEGES	32,095,593	4,352,672,063	
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE TRUST FUND	298,427,153	298,427,153	
EDUCATIONAL ADEQUACY FUND	464,366,857	464,366,857	
UNIFORM RATE OF TAX	818,811,969	818,811,969	
TOTAL	<u>4,247,573,163</u>	<u>5,934,278,042</u>	71.6%
<u>FY2009</u>			
GENERAL REVENUE FORECAST (FINAL)			
PUBLIC SCHOOL FUND	1,894,773,275		
GENERAL EDUCATION FUND	91,960,402		
TECHNICAL INSTITUTES	7,603,891		
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (FOUR YEAR)	568,219,540		
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (TWO) YEAR)	104,628,251		
TECHNICAL COLLEGES	30,862,976	4,411,009,647	
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE TRUST FUND	288,249,127	288,249,127	
EDUCATIONAL ADEQUACY FUND	403,304,107	403,304,106	
UNIFORM RATE OF TAX	881,178,991	881,178,991	
TOTAL	<u>4,270,780,560</u>	<u>5,983,741,871</u>	71.4%

(F)(1)(ii) The State's policies lead to equitable funding (a) between high-need LEAs (as defined in this notice) and other LEAs, and (b) within LEAs, between high-poverty schools (as defined in this notice) and other schools.

The education clause in the Arkansas Constitution provides that "the State shall ever maintain a general, suitable and efficient system of free public schools and shall adopt all suitable means to secure to the people the advantages and opportunities of education." In 2007, following many years of litigation, the Arkansas Supreme Court held that Arkansas "has taken the required and necessary legislative steps to assure that the school children of this State are provided with an adequate education and a substantially equal educational opportunity."

The steps taken by the State of Arkansas included hundreds of millions of dollars in new education funding, sweeping changes in academic accountability standards, and consolidation of small rural schools. In 2007, the Arkansas Legislature increased minimum State aid to public schools by \$121 million and allocated \$456 million to renovate, modernize and repair school buildings around the State. Arkansas enacted several funding mechanisms over the last several years to ensure that all students in the State receive an adequate education and equal educational opportunity.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools (40 points)

The extent to which—

- (i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State, measured (as set forth in Appendix B) by the percentage of total schools in the State that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools;
- (ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools;
- (iii) The State's charter schools receive (as set forth in Appendix B) equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues;
- (iv) The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities (for leasing facilities, purchasing facilities, or making tenant improvements), assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports; and the extent to which the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools; and
- (v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (F)(2)(i):

- A description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents. (See Appendix F-1)
- The number of charter schools allowed under State law and the percentage this represents of the total number of schools in the State.
- The number and types of charter schools currently operating in the State.

Evidence for (F)(2)(ii):

- A description of the State's approach to charter school accountability and authorization, and a description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- For each of the last five years:
 - The number of charter school applications made in the State.

- The number of charter school applications approved.
- The number of charter school applications denied and reasons for the denials (academic, financial, low enrollment, other).
- The number of charter schools closed (including charter schools that were not reauthorized to operate).

Evidence for (F)(2)(iii):

- A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the State’s approach to charter school funding, the amount of funding passed through to charter schools per student, and how those amounts compare with traditional public school per-student funding allocations.

Evidence for (F)(2)(iv):

- A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the statewide facilities supports provided to charter schools, if any.

Evidence for (F)(2)(v):

- A description of how the State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

Recommended maximum response length: Six pages

(F)(2)(i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State, measured (as set forth in Appendix B) by the percentage of total schools in the State that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools.

Since 1999, Arkansas has supported the innovation that charter schools may provide.⁴ Arkansas law currently provides for three types of charter schools: (1) “Conversion” public charter schools; (2) “Limited” public charter schools, and (3) “Open-enrollment” public charter schools.

An “Open-enrollment public charter school” is a public school sponsored and operated by an eligible entity⁵ that operates under the terms of a charter granted by the State Board of Education.⁶ Such a school may educate students who reside within any public school district in the State. A “Conversion public charter school” is defined as an existing public school which has converted to operating under the terms of a charter approved by the local school board and the State Board of Education. A “Limited public charter school” is defined as a public school that has converted to operating under the terms of a limited public charter approved by the local school Board and the State Board of Education, Limited public charter school status is specifically designed for those public school who

wish to adopt “alternative comprehensive staffing and compensation programs designed to enhance student and teacher performance and improve employee salaries, opportunities, and incentives,” in accordance with a schedule approved by the State Board of Education.

For all three types of charter schools, the “charter” is defined as a performance-based contract between the State Board of Education and an approved applicant that exempts the public charter school from State and local rules, regulations, policies, and procedures specified in the charter contract.

Conversion public charter schools and Limited public charter schools are operated by public school districts and subject to the administrative control of locally-elected school boards and public school district administrators, but the relevant schools or school campuses are permitted to operate free from the otherwise-applicable State laws, rules and regulations that are specified in the charter contract. Such schools are (subject to other applicable laws that may allow students to attend public school in a district other than the district in which they reside) attended by students who reside in the applicant school district. By contrast, Open-enrollment public charter schools are operated by the eligible sponsoring entity, any may draw students from anywhere in the State.

Arkansas law does not place a limit or “cap” on the number of Conversion public charter schools or Limited public charter schools that may be approved by the State Board of Education, Arkansas law does currently provide that the State Board of Education may approve no more than twenty-four (24) Open-enrollment charters. Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-304(c)(1). However, for purposes of this application it is important to keep in mind the history of this “cap” and how it operates in practice.

First, the Arkansas General Assembly has increased the “cap” as the number of Open-enrollment charters approved by the State Board of Education increased. The Arkansas General Assembly, by Act 890 of 1999, initially provided for a maximum of twelve (12) Open-enrollment charter schools, with no more than three in any of the State’s congressional districts. Arkansas Act 890 of 1999, § 5. In 2005, the General Assembly increased the cap to twenty-four and phased in an increase in the number of charters that could be granted within a congressional district. Arkansas Act 2005 of 2005, § 8. In 2007, the General Assembly removed the limitation on the number of charters that could be granted within any particular congressional district. Arkansas Act 736 of 2007, § 15. As of this writing, the State Board of Education has approved a total of 20 Open-enrollment charters (8 percent

of Arkansas's total LEAs). As of the date of this submission, no applicant for an Open-enrollment charter has had its application denied due to the existing "cap" of 24. While no applicant State or State agency can guarantee the future adoption of any type of legislation, we anticipate that, as has occurred in the past, when the number of high-performing Open-enrollment charters approaches the current "cap" the question of increasing or eliminating the cap to accommodate additional high-performing Charter will be given serious consideration.

Second, the "cap" on Open-enrollment charters discussed above does not mean that there may be only 24 school campuses operating as Open-enrollment public charter schools in the State. As a result of legislation passed in 2005⁷, any charter applicant that receives an approved Open-enrollment public charter from the Arkansas State Board of Education may petition the State Board at any time for additional "licenses" to establish additional Open-enrollment public charter school campuses throughout the State. Such licenses may be approved if the applicant has demonstrated success in student achievement gains; has not been subject to any disciplinary action by the State Board; has not been classified as in school improvement, academic or fiscal distress, and if it has not had its open-enrollment public charter revoked, placed on probation, or suspended. See Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-23-304(c)(2), (d)(3). Thus, approved Open-enrollment charter holders may be granted a license to open and operate additional Open-enrollment charter school campuses that do not count against the State "cap" of 24.

Evidence (F)(2)(i)

- **The number of charter schools allowed under State law and the percentage this represents of the total number of schools in the State:** 24 open-enrollment charters (8 percent of the total number of LEAs - 244), unlimited number of licenses for high-performing charters, unlimited number of conversion or limited charters
- **The number and types of charter schools currently operating in the State:** 20 open enrollment charters, 1 licensed charter campus, 11 conversion charters, 0 limited charters

(F)(2)(ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to

high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools.

Arkansas laws governing Public Charter Schools were provided to improve student learning, increase opportunities for all students with an emphasis on low achieving subgroups, encourage innovative teaching methods, create additional professional opportunities for educators, provide expanded public educational choices, and hold schools accountable for meeting student achievement standards (See Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-102). Arkansas law requires eligible entities to follow an established application process for approval. Applications are performance based contracts which are first reviewed at the local district level for approval. If approved at the local level, an application then proceeds to the State board for final authorization. If denied at the local level, an applicant has the right to proceed with a hearing before the State board regarding the matter. (See Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-302 (d)). The State Board may give preference to Open-Enrollment Public Charter Schools to be placed in a district when the percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced price lunches is above the average for the State, or if the district of location has been classified by the State board as in academic distress, or if the district of location has been classified as in some form of school improvement or fiscal distress. (See Ark. Code Ann. 6-23-304 (b)). Public Charter School applications must provide a plan for improving student achievement, include performance based objectives and criteria for the length of the contract, and provide for the involvement of school, parents, students and community stakeholders (See Ark. Code Ann. 6-23-202 and 6-23-303)).

Arkansas laws clarify that all charter schools are public schools. As such, all public charter schools are included in the public school monitoring processes of the State which include but are not limited to: fiscal oversight and reporting, meeting standards, maintaining and reporting adequate yearly progress, reporting annually to the public, maintaining a consolidated school improvement plan, providing a curriculum that aligns with State frameworks, utilizing the Arkansas Public School Computer Network for daily operations and reporting, and participating in the State mandated testing program. Public Charter Schools are also monitored by the various federal programs for compliance and reporting. Initial public charter school applications are granted for five (5) years. However, the State board may place a public charter school on probation, may modify, revoke or deny the renewal if the board determines fiscal mismanagement, failure to comply with laws and regulations, and failure to meet academic performance criteria. The State board may grant renewal applications from one to five years in length (See Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-307).

Evidence (F)(2)(ii)

- For each of the last five years:

- **The number of charter school applications made in the State.**
For the 2004-05 cycle, 5 open enrollment and 2 conversion applications were submitted.
For the 2005-06 cycle, 2 open enrollment and 0 conversion applications were submitted.
For the 2006-07 cycle, 13 open enrollment and 2 conversion applications were submitted.
For the 2007-08 cycle, 13 open enrollment and 1 conversion applications were submitted.
For the 2008-09 cycle, 8 open enrollment and 2 conversion applications were submitted.
For the 2009-10 cycle, 8 open enrollment and 4 conversion applications were submitted.
- **The number of charter school applications approved.**
For the 2004-05 cycle, 1 open enrollment and 1 conversion applications were approved.
For the 2005-06 cycle, 0 open enrollment and 0 conversion applications were approved.
For the 2006-07 cycle, 6 open enrollment and 2 conversion applications were approved.
For the 2007-08 cycle, 7 open enrollment and 0 conversion applications were approved.
For the 2008-09 cycle, 4 open enrollment and 2 conversion applications were approved.
For the 2009-10 cycle, 2 open enrollment and TBD conversion applications were approved.
- **The number of charter school applications denied and reasons for the denials (academic, financial, low enrollment, other).**
For the 2004-05 cycle, 4 open enrollment and 1 conversion applications were denied.
For the 2005-06 cycle, 2 open enrollment and 0 conversion applications were denied.
For the 2006-07 cycle, 7 open enrollment and 0 conversion applications were denied.
For the 2007-08 cycle, 6 open enrollment and 1 conversion applications were denied.
For the 2008-09 cycle, 4 open enrollment and 0 conversion applications were denied.
For the 2009-10 cycle, 6 open enrollment and TBD conversion applications were denied.

Reasons for denials:

Lack of 501 (c) (3) status; potential negative impact on desegregation efforts in the local district; lack of evidence of additional educational opportunity; lack of availability of students; potential negative impact of the charter school on a newly consolidated district; inadequate facilities; lack of a sound management plan; violation of State's limit of 500 students in virtual learning; withdrawn; not meeting the definition of a charter school; lack of confidence that the charter will address needs of underserved students.

- **The number of charter schools closed (including charter schools that were not reauthorized to operate).**
For the 2004-05 cycle, 0 open enrollment and 0 conversion charter schools were closed.
For the 2005-06 cycle, 2 open enrollment and 2 conversion charter schools were closed.
For the 2006-07 cycle, 2 open enrollment and 0 conversion charter schools were closed.
For the 2007-08 cycle, 1 open enrollment and 1 conversion charter schools were closed.

For the 2008-09 cycle, 1 open enrollment and 0 conversion charter schools were closed.

(F)(2)(iii) The State's charter schools receive (as set forth in Appendix B) equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues. (Includes evidence (F)(2)(iii).)

Public Charter Schools are funded as any other public school with regard to per pupil allocation amounts of State foundation funding (See Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-23-103, 6-23-501 and 6-23-502), and funding regarding federal aid, grants and revenue as may be provided by law. Arkansas law provides additional supports for open-enrollment public charter schools which include; providing funding to open-enrollment schools based on current year student enrollment, receiving twelve (12) equal funding installments, and the right to receive gifts and grants from private sources (See Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-501).

Arkansas is charged with providing an adequate and equitable education for all students. The State's funding formula was devised to accomplish that goal. All Arkansas public schools, including public charter schools, receive "foundation funding," a set amount of funding per student. In some fiscal years, the State also provides "enhancement funding," which allow the State to fund education at an amount above what is required for adequacy. In addition, all public schools including public charter schools receive State moneys to compensate for growth or loss of student membership, and for special categories of students such as English Language Learners, those who qualify for free or reduced meals under the National School Lunch Act, and students attending Alternative Learning Environments. Below are the components of the State's funding formula for the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years.

Funding Category	2008-09	2009-10
Foundation	\$5,789 per student	\$5,905 per student
Enhanced	\$87 per student	\$35 per student

Categorical Funding:

- Alternative Learning Environment - \$4,063 per ALE student
- English Language Learners - \$293 per ELL student
- NSLA – \$1,488 per student for schools with >90 percent free and reduced
 - \$ 992 per student for schools with 70-89 percent free and reduced
 - \$ 496 per student for schools with <70 percent free and reduced

(F)(2)(iv) The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities (for leasing facilities, purchasing facilities, or making tenant improvements), assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports; and the extent to which the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools. (Includes evidence (F)(2)(iv).)

Conversion and limited public charter schools have access to district funding which includes bonds and mill levies with regard to facilities, however, because open enrollment charter schools do not collect local property taxes they do not receive facilities funding locally or through the State's Facilities Partnership Program. Arkansas law allows for facilities offerings to open-enrollment public charter schools through the right of first refusal to purchase or lease closed or unused portions of public school facilities. Further safeguards include that the district may not lease or sell for more than the fair market value of the property. This also includes properties that are taken by eminent domain (See Ark. Code Ann, 6-23-501(d)).

Arkansas open-enrollment public charter schools often utilize local and national financial institutions that specialize in obtaining funding for educational facilities such as public charter schools. In doing so, an open-enrollment entity may apply for bond sources such as Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCBs) that provide a tax incentive to lending financial institutions.

(F)(2)(v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools. (Includes evidence (F)(2)(v).)

Currently, the State does not provide LEAs the ability to operative any other kind of public school other than what is "traditionally" allowed or through open enrollment, conversion or limited charter school status.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions (5 points)

The extent to which the State, in addition to information provided under other State Reform Conditions Criteria, has created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (F)(3):

- A description of the State's other applicable key education laws, statutes, regulations, or relevant legal documents.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

As noted in Section A of this application, Arkansas's tireless pursuit of educational reforms for well over a decade has left the State uniquely situated for continued and sustained student academic improvement. By supporting students, teachers and school administrators through top-notch curriculum development and ongoing, research-based learning opportunities for educators, Arkansas witnessed unprecedented gains in educational attainment of students. Specifically, the State's Smart Arkansas initiative encompasses its efforts to increase educational attainment through Smart Start (Arkansas's K-4 initiative), Smart Step (Arkansas's 5-8 initiative), Smart Future (Arkansas's 9-12 initiative), Smart Leadership (Arkansas's initiative to build educational leadership capacity) and Smart Accountability (Arkansas's accountability and school improvement initiative). Through these initiatives and the State's unprecedented levels of funding for public education, Arkansas has shown its unwavering commitment to pursue education reforms and improve student achievement across every demographic.

Priority 1: Absolute Priority -- Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria in order to demonstrate that the State and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform. The State must demonstrate in its application sufficient LEA participation and commitment to successfully implement and achieve the goals in its plans; and it must describe how the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, will use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

The absolute priority cuts across the entire application and should not be addressed separately. It is assessed, after the proposal has been fully reviewed and evaluated, to ensure that the application has met the priority.

Priority 2: Competitive Preference Priority -- Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). (15 points, all or nothing)

To meet this priority, the State's application must have a high-quality plan to address the need to (i) offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering; (ii) cooperate with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers, or other STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students; and (iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The competitive preference priority will be evaluated in the context of the State's entire application. Therefore, a State that is responding to this priority should address it throughout the application, as appropriate, and provide a summary of its approach to addressing the priority in the text box below. The reviewers will assess the priority as part of their review of a State's application and determine whether it has been met.

Recommended maximum response length, if any: One page

Arkansas's STEM Focus

Race to the Top provides an unprecedented opportunity to ensure that Arkansas's education system is focused on and produces results needed in today's STEM economic environment. Through this grant, every Local Education Agency (LEA) in the State will be encouraged to have a quality STEM program that prepares all students for the 21st Century. The challenge of building this capacity is of staggering significance, and we cannot fail to face it and successfully meet the challenge. Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe campaigned, and governs, with the central theme that education and economic development are inextricably linked together. The connective tissue is the workforce, and we must make certain that the infrastructure is in place throughout Arkansas's educational system to ensure we are preparing students to be successful in the most difficult disciplines and to the highest academic levels.

The Arkansas Discovery Network

The State is fortunate to have an innovative network of seven museums and educational centers called the Arkansas Discovery Network that focuses on making hands-on, interactive museum experiences more accessible to the State's 498,000 schoolchildren and their families. The Network's

seven member organizations are located strategically throughout Arkansas to extend outreach to all areas. The museums support each other by sharing operational strategies, collaborating with teachers and expanding educational programs. Network members include the Museum of Discovery in Little Rock, Mid America Science Museum in Hot Springs, Arts and Science Center for Southeast Arkansas in Pine Bluff, Texarkana Museums System in Texarkana, Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources in Smackover and Arkansas State University Museum in Jonesboro. The University of Arkansas Center for Mathematics and Science Education in Fayetteville will host network exhibits until a permanent northwest Arkansas museum partner is established.

Arkansas's Race to the Top application supports the Discovery Network in two ways: The STEM Careers Connections Website and The Summer Science Institute Teacher Professional Development

The STEM Careers Connections Website

Over the last several years, the number of students graduating from a college or university in the United States with a degree in science has been declining at an alarming rate. Here in Arkansas, as well as across the country, we must work to interest our kids in science, math, technology and engineering, and foster their desire to pursue careers in those fields. It was recently announced that Arkansas ranks among the last in the nation for generating college graduates and keeping those graduates employed in the State, especially in the sciences.

The Arkansas Discovery Network aims to encourage our students to consider science careers via a format they know best: electronic media. The Network proposes to develop an interactive website that employs a variety of methods to inform, enlighten and support our students as they explore their dreams. This fun and engaging website will be designed to encourage students from kindergarten through 12th grade to consider science, technology, engineering and/or math as a career and show them the pathways to achieve their goals.

The Summer Science Institute Teacher Professional Development

The Arkansas Discovery Network will partner with the ADE and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education to create an annual Summer Science Institute modeled after an extremely successful program in California. This workshop teaches teachers how to incorporate inquiry-based science learning activities in the classroom. This progressive four-year plan will create a network of specially trained teachers who, together, can change and vastly improve the way science is taught in Arkansas.

The goal of the Summer Science Institute is to act on the advice of various educational research agencies and provide comprehensive, inquiry-based, and sustained teacher professional development in math and science, modeled after proven techniques of 20 years.

The Exploratorium in San Francisco, California, has been conducting 4-week Teacher Institute professional development workshops for over 20 years. These intensive, inquiry-based workshops immerse in-service teachers in cutting-edge techniques designed to thoroughly engage students in scientific exploration. By summer 2010, 32 Arkansas teachers will be trained in this method thanks to funding from the Arkansas Discovery Network. In addition, the ADE has used the same method to train the 27 science education specialists in each Cooperative and the 12 STEM Centers located around the State.

The Arkansas Summer Science Institute will use the experience and expertise of the Arkansas Discovery Network alumni and the ADE science specialists to develop similar workshops in Arkansas. The goal is to create a network of teachers around the State who regularly interact and support each other. Having the workshops in Arkansas will reach more teachers and reduce overall costs.

Increasing STEM Programming in all LEAs

To meet the goal of Arkansas's Race to the Top initiative to have quality STEM programming integrated into the curriculum in all LEAs, participating LEAs must implement at least one of the programs listed below. These programs have been very successful at engaging students in the STEM fields. Arkansas will provide priority access to competitive programs to its *persistently low performing schools*. After the Race to the Top grant is received, technical assistance will be provided by the State and its partners to help LEAs determine which program will best meet their needs. If one of the programs listed below already exists in the LEA, then the LEA must choose another option or determine how they can build on their current STEM programming by personalizing the choice that matches their specific needs ("Build-Your-Own" program).

STEM Starters

Systemic opportunities for learners in science, technology, and engineering are limited in Arkansas elementary schools. To address the Arkansas's statewide lack of opportunity in these lower grades, a STEM initiative, Project STEM Starters, was developed and subsequently funded through the U. S.

Department of Education Jacob K. Javits Program. The project components, goals, objectives and activities focus on increased science learning for all students in grades 2 through 5 and increased knowledge and skills in the STEM disciplines for their educators.

Project STEM Starters is a scale-up project of two previous U. S. Department of Education projects which demonstrated through scientifically-based research and evaluation studies that they increased achievement in the core subject area of science for elementary students from **under-represented groups and provided effective professional development to teachers**. The project components, which resulted in increased teacher knowledge and skills and student achievement, are configured in this unique model.

STEM Starters brings the excitement of science, technology, mathematics, and engineering to both students and teachers. In multiple studies, the inquiry-based science units implemented in Project STEM Starters have demonstrated increases in student science achievement, critical thinking, and understanding of scientific investigation (Feng et al., 2005; VanTassel-Baska et al., 1998; VanTassel-Baska et al., 2007). Additionally, the *Arkansas Evaluation Initiative* (AEI) Institute and Peer Coaching components demonstrated statistically significant results in increasing teacher knowledge in skills in areas of focus (Robinson, Cotabish, Wood, & Pearson, 2006, Cotabish & Robinson, 2007). Project STEM Starters involves the larger STEM community in Arkansas, provides intensive professional development, develops additional rich instructional materials to supplement the field-tested and validated science curriculum units, and focuses on well-designed research and evaluation studies to document the project.

As part of the Race to the Top grant, 25 additional schools will be able to implement the STEM Starters program statewide. Race to the Top funds would also fill a gap in the current programming and permit full participation in STEM Starters professional development project. The inclusion of science experts, business leaders, and policy makers from the Arkansas STEM Coalition at the outset of Project STEM Starters enhances its opportunities for statewide institutionalization.

Please see more information on STEM Starters in the Invitational Priorities Appendix.

Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science – Advanced Placement Training and Incentive Program

On August 29, 2007, Governor Mike Beebe announced that Arkansas was one of only seven States

to receive a \$13.2 million grant from the National Math and Science Initiative to improve the Advanced Placement scores of students. The coordinating organization, the **Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science (AAIMS)**, is a non-profit corporation that works with Arkansas schools and the private sector to maximize the number of students achieving qualifying scores on AP mathematics, science, and English exams by planning, implementing, and incentivizing programs. The **Advanced Placement Training and Incentive programs** replicate the highly successful and nationally acclaimed AP Strategies Program originally implemented in the Dallas Independent School District. These training and incentive programs complement the Advanced Placement Program® administered by the College Board.

Arkansas's Advanced Placement Training and Incentive Program (APTIP) increases participation and performance of public high school students in rigorous college-level work in math, science, and English Advanced Placement (AP) courses and exams and expands access to college-level courses for traditionally under-represented students. Research shows students who pass an AP course are three times more likely to earn a college degree than those who do not take an AP exam. This program is a comprehensive approach that increases teacher effectiveness and student achievement through content training, teacher and student support, vertical alignment of teachers, expanded open enrollment, and incentives.

The overall goals of these training and incentive programs are to:

- Increase the number of students taking AP tests;
- Increase the number of students passing AP tests; and
- Increase the number of students attending and graduating from college.

This program produced dramatic annual increases in the number of students passing rigorous AP math, science and English exams, and the program has sustained those increases for over a decade in other States. Further, results for African American and Hispanic students outstripped those of majority students, thereby closing the achievement gap at the most rigorous level.

Arkansas's Race to the Top application supports the **addition of 60 more schools** over the next four years. This will be in addition to the 24 schools currently operating the APTIP program. Key Elements of Success for Scaling and Implementing the APTIP.

1. **Open Enrollment for math, science and English AP courses** – It is critical to change the culture of the school from one of exclusivity with regard to who may take AP courses to an inclusive culture that encourages reluctant students to enroll in rigorous courses. Too often, students must prove their way into challenging courses, thereby limiting enrollment to just a few top students. This policy reinforces stereotypes about what AP students “look like.” In most high schools, there are many more students who could succeed in math, science and English AP courses if encouraged to enroll and if given exceptional quality instruction and support. A strong culture of high expectations is critical to success as it demonstrates to students that adults believe they can achieve at the most demanding levels and are willing to help them do so.
2. **Incentives for teacher and student performance** – Offering incentives for performance and extra pay for extra work sends a message to students and teachers that expansion of and success in rigorous AP courses are important. It realigns a cultural misconception that has long viewed AP as an exclusive program. Incentives also send the message that the goal is passing a nationally recognized benchmark of performance rather than just obtaining a grade in a course. They set the stage for a continuous focus toward meeting a very high standard and getting recognition for that achievement. It also encourages teachers to consider taking the training necessary to teach more rigorous courses, because not only students, but teachers also take a risk when it comes to teaching more rigorous courses. Financial awards for adding extra work to their schedules effectively encourages them to take that risk.
3. **High quality, content-focused teacher training** – Most of today’s high school teachers do not have the level of content knowledge required to successfully teach a rigorous AP math or AP science course. It is critical that intensive training be provided to build this capacity. The College Board provides national quality control for this teacher preparation by approving professional development instructors who have demonstrated and met high standards of performance in teaching rigorous AP courses. Summer training plus additional classes during the year provide teachers with deepened content knowledge and the pedagogy required to provide the highest quality instruction.
4. **Teacher mentoring and vertical teaming** – Research in professional development shows that, to be effective, professional development must also include continuous support at the school level.

Accordingly, each APTIP teacher is assigned a lead teacher who provides guidance, feedback, training, and other support to help the APTIP teacher reach his or her full potential and the full potential of the students. The lead teacher also guides a team of same-subject content teachers across vertical grade levels so that the elementary level instructors can learn how to prepare students for rigorous AP courses at the junior and senior grades. This creates a crucial and continuous pipeline of students who have received the requisite background that will allow them to succeed in AP math and science.

Please see more information on APTIP and the result accomplished in Arkansas in the Invitational Priorities Appendix.

EAST

The EAST Initiative, which began in Arkansas, is a national nonprofit organization that provides new ways of learning for modern students. EAST focuses on student-driven service projects through the use of the latest in technology. EAST schools are equipped with classrooms containing state-of-the-art workstations, servers, software, and accessories, including GPS/GIS mapping tools, architectural and CAD design software, 3D animation suites, and much more. Students find problems in their local communities, and then use these tools to solve them.

EAST's focus, however, is not on technology itself, but on the unique learning environment of the EAST classroom. In EAST, students are responsible for creating their own lesson plans. There are no lectures and no tests; instead, the students are guided by an EAST facilitator (a teacher trained in the EAST process). This radically different approach to learning shows tremendous results - students are better-prepared for both college and the business world, and they care more about learning.

The EAST model—as it was designed—has a powerful impact on students. The positive outcomes of EAST have been notoriously difficult for the educational community to achieve in a general population of learners and transcend the arbitrary nature of standardized assessment and grading. EAST has a great impact not only on individual students' education, but also on community development and economic health. The EAST model actually engages students in their educational careers, their vocational and college planning and in their communities. It raises the aspirations of students *as well as* their test scores. It works for a diverse population, both male and female, across ethnic, socio-economic and academic groups and other demographic distinctions mirroring the real

world. It does this by helping students gain proficiency with the tools of emerging technology and vocational fields. In short, EAST prepares its students to lead and to contribute. (See the Invitational Priorities Appendix for research on the EAST Initiative.)

Further benefits of this program were the opportunity for greater community buy in, the opportunity for employment experience in sophisticated technology projects for students, and the opportunity for the local programs to supplement their technology with new or updated equipment. The local EAST programs that participated in EICP were seen to take significant steps in the overall development of their EAST programs and in the integration of 21st century learning into the wider school curricula.

The Race to the Top application will allow the expansion of the existing EAST Initiative into up to 60 additional schools with priority going to the State's lowest performing schools and to expand the learning opportunities to students in the existing schools that have EAST programs through an EAST After Hours program. It is very important to understand that when schools begin EAST implementation, they are not purchasing a program in a box, but rather that they are committing themselves to an educationally transformational process that will require a significant investment of time and energy by the teacher/facilitator of the local program, the students, and the faculty and staff of the school.

The EAST classroom is designed to be a resource for the school and community. From a practical standpoint, use of classroom resources for other areas of the school or program is encouraged. However, it is important for the district to understand that this class is designed to be a stand alone class operating on a student-run network. Concurrent use of the EAST classroom with other class offerings is typically discouraged. When districts commit to this program, they must also commit to is sustainability.

Real World Design Project

Arkansas is pleased to participate in the Real World Design Challenge (RWDC), a national education initiative that puts high school students alongside industry experts to gain engineering experience by developing a solution to a proposed challenge. The Real World Design Challenge encourages students to pursue math, science and engineering fields and puts our students in a great position to enter the working world.

The Real World Design Challenge bridges the needs of industry with the future of education. It teaches innovation, creativity, and collaboration using the expertise that industry, government and higher education have been perfecting for decades. With this real world approach to learning, we can keep our workforce strong, and ensure Arkansas's prosperity for the future. Because a large percentage of the STEM workforce is eligible to retire, the Real World Design Challenge addresses this workforce need by building capacity in the State, motivating students and providing significant resources to enhance education in STEM fields.

To participate in the program, schools will be required to encourage students to investigate or pursue math, science and engineering fields. This year, students will participate in a national challenge to design the tail section of an aircraft to maximize fuel efficiency. The student project solutions will be evaluated by scientists, engineers, and college and university faculty members. This program will play an integral role in expanding the State's talent pool in STEM to include student populations who may not have had this kind of exposure otherwise.

Build your own STEM program

An LEA may build their own STEM program if they are not awarded or do not want to participate in the STEM opportunities above. However, each program must have a plan to address the following criteria:

- Barriers must be removed so all kids are exposed to STEM programs.
- An evaluation system must be developed at the on-set to measure the programs effectiveness with the end focused on all students being prepared for college and the workforce.
- Higher education is a required partner. (Business and industry partners are also recommended.)
- Delivery must include innovative teaching and learning methods.
- Professional development in the STEM areas is required for all teachers and principals working in the program area.
- The plan must include an explanation about how the entire P-12 system at the LEA will be affected by the program.
- Provide summer enrichment programs in the STEM areas.
- Ensure hands-on, applied delivery of content.
- Provide teachers and counselors with professional development on STEM careers (Educators in Industry model)

Priority 3: Invitational Priority – Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes *(not scored)*

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications that include practices, strategies, or programs to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (prekindergarten through third grade) by enhancing the quality of preschool programs. Of particular interest are proposals that support practices that (i) improve school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive); and (ii) improve the transition between preschool and kindergarten.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length, if any: Two pages

Building on Arkansas's Early Childhood Success

Arkansas has made tremendous strides in improving the quality of preschool services. Since 2004, the State has invested an additional \$100 million in State general revenue to the State funded Arkansas Better Chance for School Success program. More importantly, the pre-k program in Arkansas has been nationally recognized by the National Institute for Early Education Research for creating access for both three and four year old children and for the quality standards.

Arkansas has strong partnerships across agencies as evidenced by the relationship between the Department of Human Services/Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and the Department of Education who jointly share responsibility for State funded pre-k. Arkansas has worked for the past 10 years on strengthening the partnerships between these two agencies impacting the majority of early childhood services in the State along with Head Start. The data from the Early Learning Inventory, which is given to all entering kindergarten children, has continued to show improvement on school readiness skills.

Arkansas still has challenges in improving early childhood quality especially for the youngest children where the majority of infant/toddler care is mediocre or poor and because we have lessons learned from the implementation of State funded pre-k, Arkansas would propose a research and design project with three initiatives to improve the quality of early learning in the State.

The first initiative targeting low performing schools and data systems/use of data would be to ensure that children birth-five have access to an evidence-based model home visitation program to support child development and parenting education. The model for children birth to two could be a nurse home visitation model or Parents as Teachers and for children three to five (3-5), the Home

Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters or Parents as Teachers could be utilized. The goal is to target 100 children in two to five of the lowest performing school districts with these additional interventions and strengthen the tracking capability that is currently in place to determine effectiveness.

The second initiative will provide Conscious Discipline training to 50 pre-kindergarten teachers scoring the lowest in the Interactions section of the Environmental Rating Scales because cognitive, emotional and social capacities are inextricably intertwined in the brain. In like fashion, learning, behavior and both physical and mental health are highly interrelated throughout one's lifespan. One domain cannot be targeted without affecting the others. The brain's multiple functions operate in a richly coordinated fashion: emotional well-being and social competence provide a strong foundation for emerging cognitive abilities, and together they are bricks and mortar that comprise the foundation of human development. The emotional and physical health, social skills, and cognitive-linguistic capacities that emerge in the early years are all important prerequisites for success in school and later in the workplace and community. Funds for this portion of the initiative are needed to cover tuition for a seven-day workshop and to build capacity which would include a minimum of two trainers to work in Arkansas for the replication purposes.

Additionally, a final component for evaluating would include securing a Data Analyst to review what is currently in place between the agencies to track children's progress. The Data Analyst would review data on children entering kindergarten and what the Early Learning Inventory data reveals about the student and determine which interventions are working most effectively. Both agencies have data systems collecting information on the children served but analyzing the data and utilizing the data to inform program improvement is still a challenge. This work could lay the foundation for school leaders and others in communities in Arkansas to rethink what we currently are doing and redirect resources if there is a better way of educating all our children.

These three components within the invitational piece of the Race to the Top Fund help draw together schools, collect and analyze the data gathered, put proper training in place for teachers and caregivers, keep systems and personnel in place to continue to gather and make determinations to ensure successful replication potentialities throughout the State. In total, Arkansas would need \$2.7 million annually to successfully implement the innovative educational tools which are critical to the success of children to adulthood.

Priority 4: Invitational Priority – Expansion and Adaptation of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems *(not scored)*

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State plans to expand statewide longitudinal data systems to include or integrate data from special education programs, English language learner programs, early childhood programs, at-risk and dropout prevention programs, and school climate and culture programs, as well as information on student mobility, human resources (*i.e.*, information on teachers, principals, and other staff), school finance, student health, postsecondary education, and other relevant areas, with the purpose of connecting and coordinating all parts of the system to allow important questions related to policy, practice, or overall effectiveness to be asked, answered, and incorporated into effective continuous improvement practices.

The Secretary is also particularly interested in applications in which States propose working together to adapt one State's statewide longitudinal data system so that it may be used, in whole or in part, by one or more other States, rather than having each State build or continue building such systems independently.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length, if any: Two pages

Early Warning System

The creation of an early warning system is critical to increasing graduation rates across the Arkansas. A high school diploma is not enough to compete in a competitive job market and States must not only determine how to ensure all students graduate from high school, but also enter and succeed in post-secondary education and training.

In order to appropriately identify students who may potential drop out of school, Arkansas has already set into motion the development of an early warning system. This system will build on our already robust data system to support the identification of "triggers". The Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Planning (ACSIP) system currently triggers identification for special education students in districts and requires the district to create priorities to address the needs of these students. Modifying the ACSIP system to identify districts with issues such as high dropout rates and low attendance rates will assist in the data collection to help create an effective early warning system. Arkansas hopes to become a national leader on early warning systems because past research has yet to consider the differences between rural and urban districts that are likely to surface in Arkansas.

A substantial body of research has identified that attendance, grades, retention, test scores, discipline, student engagement, and social issues have the greatest impact on student's decision to drop out of high school. While all these indicators are viable, specific research in Arkansas is needed to identify the appropriate triggers for the State's population. Specific Arkansas data will make the triggers more effective in identifying at-risk students. Based on a short term study in partnership with Johns Hopkins University, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) will identify these triggers that will be used to identify student interventions. ADE and Johns Hopkins University will share information in order to develop an early warning data system that may lead to improvement in academic programs, curriculum, and educational policies for the ADE and the educational institutions under its purview.

The predictive study with Bob Balfanz at Johns Hopkins University is in progress. Arkansas has started the study with 4th grade students and two graduation years which we feel will be beneficial. Data elements for the study have been determined and the years necessary to complete the research. Arkansas has also executed an agreement with Johns Hopkins University which allows the ADE and Johns Hopkins University to share confidential student-level data without violating FERPA. It is our intent to have identified all data elements before March 30, 2010.

Once appropriate indicators are identified and the State knows which districts can be early adopters in a pilot phase, the indicators can be added to the real-time information on a dashboard for use by teachers and others who work with middle and high school youth in the schools on a day-to-day basis. Another benefit of an early warning system is the ability to track the effectiveness of various interventions and support strategies. Once the early warning system is developed and implemented, Arkansas will be able to use the data to inform and evaluate a range of supports and interventions offered to students who are off-track for graduation and college and careers.

A group of stakeholders from across the State will be used as a think-tank to assist the State with identifying interventions, student supports and professional development. Through the work of this group decisions will be made in regards to whether the State will require schools to have certain interventions in place or whether options will be allowed. As with all State initiatives, the State will offer technical assistance, coordination, and monitoring.

Arkansas's current data system will also need to be modified to include new, real-time data such as attendance and discipline so that the identified triggers can be used. In order for this type of data to be effective, districts must provide the State with this information much more immediately and regularly than in the past. This new system will also be accompanied by a "safety net" program that will lead to student recovery. This "safety net" will include mentoring programs that involve direct and concentrated teacher involvement with regard to at-risk students.

A special opportunity to build support for the early warning system relates to recent enactment by the Arkansas Legislature of a law requiring the creation of The Arkansas Project Graduation Commission. This Commission purpose is to:

- Investigate high school dropout prevention strategies;
- Analyze the relationship between high school graduation rates and the State's economy; and
- Recommend strategies that will increase the overall high school graduation rate of Arkansas students by helping parents, schools and students identify academic warning signs of dropping out.

Arkansas plans to have a pilot system in place for a limited number of school districts for the 2010-11 school year. In addition, the State will provide technical assistance and training to participating pilot districts on interventions that may be effective and will track interventions and evaluate their impact. The plan is to make the system voluntary for all districts for the 2011-12 school year. ADE has adopted the policy marker of establishing an early warning system to identify students most at risk of going off track and providing the interventions they need to get them back on track towards college and career readiness.

Priority 5: Invitational Priority -- P-20 Coordination, Vertical and Horizontal Alignment *(not scored)*

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State plans to address how early childhood programs, K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, workforce development organizations, and other State agencies and community partners (e.g., child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice agencies) will coordinate to improve all parts of the education system and create a more seamless preschool-through-graduate school (P-20) route for students. Vertical alignment across P-20 is particularly critical at each point where a transition occurs (e.g., between early childhood and K-12, or between K-12 and postsecondary/careers) to ensure that students exiting one level are prepared for success, without remediation, in the next. Horizontal alignment, that is, coordination of services across schools, State agencies, and community partners, is also important in ensuring that high-need students (as defined in this notice) have access to the broad array of opportunities and services they need and that are beyond the capacity of a school itself to provide.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

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College Based Secondary Area Technical Centers

Arkansas must fully embrace college and work-readiness as one and the same. We must understand that we will lose a generation of students who won't understand that their participation in the workplace is viable to the nation's economic stability if we do not focus on the application of the academics to business and industry. So, Arkansas considers this statement as reported in the September 2009 issue of "Techniques," a publication of the Association for Career and Technical Education:

"Today's long-term jobs crisis is not about the current financial meltdown. It is about an accelerating talent slowdown. The basic cause is that unprecedented technological advances are ever more rapidly transforming the world of work. The global economy will be more tech-driven with each passing year. This will continue to raise the U.S. talent ante for people seeking employment for businesses that need to fill high-skill jobs. The U. S. Department of Labor finds that 62 percent of all U.S. jobs now require two-year or four-year degrees and higher, or special postsecondary occupational certifications or apprenticeships. By 2020 we can expect that these talent requirements will increase to include 75 percent of U.S. jobs. The World Future Society predicts that over the next decade the amount of new technology introduced into the U.S. economy will equal that of the last 50 years! We are already witnessing a major talent shift from low-skill jobs to more complex knowledge jobs across

major world economies as we enter what I term a 'Cyber-Mental Age' of ultra-high technology." *Written by Edward E. Gordon, author of Winning the Global Talent Slowdown.*

One way Arkansas has made preparing our students for the workplace a priority is through our Secondary Technical Centers. Sponsored by two-year colleges, fifteen secondary area technical centers offer Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs to high school students within 25- mile radius of their local high school. Each center draws students from several high schools, enabling the students to access high-cost programs which focus on the STEM cluster such as Pre-engineering, Advanced Manufacturing, and Bio fuels. These college centers provide the postsecondary opportunities and connections that students would not have in their local school. While Arkansas has done a great job of providing CTE opportunities, students at 67 high schools still do not have access to an area technical center.

College centers offer a system which provides a seamless transition for students from high school to postsecondary education. This partnership between secondary and postsecondary educational institutions allows students at these centers to earn both college and high school credit for the courses they take at no charge to the student. According to a recent U.S. Department of Education report on student success in college, earning some college credit while in high school is a positive factor for college graduation (Hoover, 2006). Last year 4,259 students enrolled in Arkansas technical centers and earned 28,230 hours of college concurrent credit in Career and Technical courses.

In addition to the fifteen college centers, nine centers are operated by school districts and students at these centers. These centers provide a strong industry based curriculum and many offer industry certifications and STEM based instruction.

Our goal is to increase the opportunities for concurrent credit in both our nine existing district centers and to open new college centers in the seven community college areas not presently serving the 67 high schools mentioned above. These sites are based in the Hope, Ozark, Mountain Home, Melbourne, Pocahontas, Newport, and Batesville areas.

The anticipated budget for these vital school improvement activities would be approximately \$12,500 each for the nine existing district based centers to strengthen college partnerships, and approximately \$250,000 each to establish the 7 new college based career centers.

The emphasis for these established programs would be to increase interest in the STEM cluster programs and to strengthen college transition. Annually, over 150,000 Arkansas secondary students enroll in CTE classes. This CTE enrollment number reflects nearly 75% of all secondary students. If it is the goal to increase STEM interest, increase graduation rate, and to increase the number of students completing high level academics, improving Career and Technical Education courses is the solution. Recent data from the past 7 years demonstrates that the number of secondary CTE completers attending public Arkansas colleges has increased 200% and that those who complete 30 hours in their freshman year has increased 10%. All this with the remediation rate of our CTE completers being reduced by 14%.

Once these programs have begun with the above mentioned seed funding, the ongoing cost would be supported with improved efficiency and effectiveness in utilizing current State and federal funding, and through seeking additional industry support. This industry support has already been demonstrated in both the Transportation cluster and in the Law and Public Safety cluster.

The seven new college centers will further support the goals of the Arkansas Works initiative, a multi-state-agency cooperative endeavor designed to prepare Arkansans for today's workforce. Arkansas Works was launched in fall of 2009. Among other services, Arkansas Works provides a comprehensive college and career planning system focused on "significantly increasing the number of underrepresented students who enter and remain in postsecondary education." An expanded network of college centers will complement Arkansas Works' primary goal: "to ensure that ALL Arkansans have the opportunity and support needed to increase their knowledge, skills, and educational attainment."

Priority 6: Invitational Priority -- School-Level Conditions for Reform, Innovation, and Learning *(not scored)*

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State's participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) seek to create the conditions for reform and innovation as well as the conditions for learning by providing schools with flexibility and autonomy in such areas as—

- (i) Selecting staff;
- (ii) Implementing new structures and formats for the school day or year that result in increased learning time (as defined in this notice);
- (iii) Controlling the school's budget;
- (iv) Awarding credit to students based on student performance instead of instructional time;
- (v) Providing comprehensive services to high-need students (as defined in this notice) (e.g., by mentors and other caring adults; through local partnerships with community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other providers);
- (vi) Creating school climates and cultures that remove obstacles to, and actively support, student engagement and achievement; and
- (vii) Implementing strategies to effectively engage families and communities in supporting the academic success of their students.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

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Office of Innovation

Arkansas has a strong history of educational reform and an infrastructure of systems that support low performing LEAs, but there is a need to create a new focus on reform that will allow all schools meet the requirements of NCLB. This necessitates a change in focus with a new emphasis on innovation. The creation of an Office of Innovation would foster an innovative and entrepreneurial approach to the dissemination and implementation of successful reform efforts. The Office of Innovation will initiate a fresh approach to educational reform that broadens the conversation by engaging all stakeholders in identifying the critical areas of reform. With consensus on areas that need improving, the Office of Innovation would engage stakeholders in identifying solutions that have had proven success in tackling these educational reform issues and share that information with the State's LEAs. Its mission would be to deliver innovative educational solutions that help our LEAs achieve what they want most – results in increasing academic achievement.

- **Establish a communications plan**, using an RFP process to identify partners who would provide a comprehensive communication network to share information and data to all stakeholders around the identified educational reform issues. This work would include:
 - Establish Blogs, Podcasts and Videos to support each of the reform areas;
 - Develop and implement a bimonthly eNewsletter around the reform efforts;
 - Establish an Innovation Network with monthly topics of interest that would provide research and best practices to all stakeholders who joined the network;
 - Identify from the Scholastic Audit process a set of “Best Practices” that could be shared via the Innovation Network;
 - Match high need schools with those sites that have innovative practices focusing on the areas in need of improvement.
- **Resource Allocation and Alignment Services** – Office of Innovation will offer specialized consultative services to LEAs on how to address the key issues around implementation of fiscal support services to allow for the certain kinds of expertise.
- **Innovation Recognition** would result from review of successful reform practices identified during the Scholastic Audit process. These areas of excellence in LEAs will be highlighted as innovative pilots that will be shared with other educators. During the final years of implementation, specific rewards for excellence will be defined.