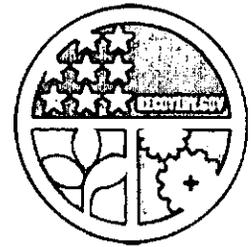




Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1



Arizona Application #1200AZ-1

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	42
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	2
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	33
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	7

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(A) (1) (i) The application provides examples of how the state has strengthened standards and assessments, provided for a statewide longitudinal data system, provided for teacher certification and supports struggling schools. Arizona's reform strategy includes a focus on transition, a rural and STEM strategy for the 21st Century. The goals for this program lack the depth required for clarifying the pathway to achieving them. At a minimum, each goal needs to be broken out to provide the activities associated with that goal, the timeline for implementation and the person/organization responsible for implementation. The budget for this program must reflect all costs and a rationale for determining the costs. Letters of support from local and state educational, political, business leaders and organizations must show a strong statewide support for the reform agenda. (A) (1) (ii) (a) The terms and conditions do not differ from the model offered by RTTT. This ties the participating school districts to reform in each area and must be considered a strength. (A) (1) (ii) (b) The scope-of-work descriptions require participating LEAs to implement all of the state's RTTT plans. This is approach links the implementation of reform plays directly to school districts. (A) (1) (ii) While representing slightly less than 60% of the LEAs with signed MOUs, the narrative states that this represents a significant number of students in the state. This section lacks details showing the impact of the plan on students in districts not signing the MOU and a rationale for the low number of Board Presidents signing the MOU as well as the significantly low number of union representatives. The impact of the plan requires further strength by showing the impact on all state students once it is implemented. (A) (1) (a, b, c, d) To improve this section, information is required regarding the goals for reading and math and what they would look like were the state not to receive an award under the program. The goals set for reading and math require a greater depth including how the goals were arrived at in the projections. This weakness requires the narrative to supply a rationale for the goals and a similar rationale must include graduation rates and narrowing the gap among the subgroups.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	6
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	5
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	1

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(A) (2) (i) (a) The response to this section is very general and requires the organization of the RTTT team, the specific persons on the team, their relationship to the proposed goals and activities and the timeline for carrying out those activities to be adequately explained in detail. The section provides more questions than answers to the provision for an effective and strong leadership team. To

strengthen this, it would be helpful to provide an organizational chart for the proposed team/office and its reporting responsibilities in addition to their duties, responsibilities, and activities. If more is known about the persons who will occupy these positions, it would be of assistance in helping to provide supplementary information regarding their ability to carry out the duties assigned to them. (b) The approach used here is to have the local LEA develop their own priorities for the use of RTTT funds. This approach effectually leaves the decision making in LEA hands. There does not seem to be any strategic use of the plan emanating from the State that districts have to follow. This section contains little about what the ADE would do to improve teacher performance, identifying promising practices, evaluating these practices' effectiveness and ceasing ineffective practices. It is difficult to see how the current approach will result in high-quality education reform. Specific supports to districts needs to be clearly presented. (c) ADE indicates that a cross-functional team is in place and can provide grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring and fund disbursement. Aside from this, little is presented in the way of indicating how effective and efficient operations and practices will take place under the grant. To strengthen this, information needs to be detailed and more specific than a one paragraph account. (d) As with the previous section, there is little here to satisfy this question. Only two sentences are provided for this question. This section does not supply information regarding coordinating, reallocating or repurposing education funds from other federal, state or local sources to align with the RTTT goals. The budget narrative is insufficient to address the plans and targets which are outlined. (e) The use of fiscal resources at the conclusion of the grant requires an adequate explanation. Information would be helpful in demonstrating how political capital can be utilized and how personnel will continue with reforms. (A) (2) (ii) Additional letters of support from critical stakeholders are necessary. This section does not have significant development to show statewide support for the reforms from a variety of educational, tribal schools, parents, students, universities, colleges and community organizations.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	14
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	9

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(i) This is a strong statement dealing with past efforts at reform. (ii) (a) The narrative provides information regarding gains on both NAEP and AIMS testing and points to gains in reading for every subgroup. Asians and white students continued to outperform all other subgroups. Arizona points to the growing population of Hispanic students in the schools which rose by 25% in 4th grade to 33% in 8th grade between 2003 and 2007. The rate of proficiency on the NAEP for these subgroups rose from 13% to 20% while Asian proficiency rose from 38% to 46%. For 8th grade mathematics on the same test, the percentage of proficiency rose from 21% to 29% with substantial gains made by Hispanic students. The graphs were reviewed with this in mind and can be substantiated. No tables or graphs within the narrative provide supporting evidence. This is a major problem for the application, since evidence is required to substantiate this. Information pertaining to SWD or ELL was provided within the narrative, but was referenced in the Appendix graphs. (b) Scores prior to 2005 are not comparable on AIMS due to test changes. The narrative points to ADEs programs (IDEAL, Web portal with an item bank of AIMS-aligned questions, teacher professional development and standards-based material) as having resulted in improvements. Information is provided regarding significant Hispanic improvements on AIMS mathematics between 2005-2009. This section lacks the in-depth analysis of outcomes. (c) In this area, Appendix T shows a flat line of growth in graduation rates for white and Asian students. The same is true for African American students and Hispanics. Native Americans have moved from 55% in 2007 to 60% in 2008. The dip in the graduation rates in 2006 is attributed to the introduction in 2006 of an AIMS proficiency requirement for graduation. ELL students and SWD graduate rates dropped significantly in 2006 and have not recovered to their previous rate of graduation as of 2008. No information or documentation was provided about exclusion rates for SWDs and ELLs.

Total	125	62
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	30
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	15
(ii) Adopting standards	20	15
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(B) (1) (i) A copy of the draft standards has not been included. The statement: "anticipates adoption" is very ambiguous and leads to a weakness of these statements. It is important to state whether the state will or will not implement the standards. The process leading up to adoption of standards by August 2, 2010 has not been completely identified. It is important that a process be described in the narrative that leads to specific procedures for adoption. (ii) As noted above, standards adoption is "anticipated" by or before August 2, 2010. The applicant lays out a timeline of activities leading to the adoption of standards. The narrative does not indicate how the standards will be implemented in a well-planned way.</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	8
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i).The identity of the thirty-six states has not been provided as required by the criteria.</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	14
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(B) (3) The narrative meets the criteria established for enhancing standards and high-quality assessments. The state has had experience in developing detailed roll-out programs in the past. As evidence they point to their experience with the 2003 Reading and Mathematics Academic Standards and 2008 new mathematics standards. Following the adoption of the common core standards for reading and mathematics, this will be transmitted to the LEAs where implementation will be supported by the ADE through technical assistance and professional development. It is important to note that much of the curriculum work will be done by the LEA with oversight by the RTTT team and points to the need for a team of academic/instructional specialists to develop support materials. Following a one year transition to new standards, the full implementation of assessments will take place in 2012. Interim assessments will be the responsibility of the LEA. They will develop these to benchmark progress. A series of professional development activities are described to support this. At the higher education level, the SBE will work closely with them to insure that students are ready for college. At the elementary level, Arizona will implement its revised student retention policy in the 3rd grade only in SY 2010. The response lacks completeness and requires that it be more fully developed to describe the process of transition.</p>		
Total	70	52

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(C)(1) The narrative provides sufficient information on all seven elements of the America COMPETES Act. The remaining five data elements have not been supplied.</p>		

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(C)(2) The plan appears credible, but lacks a detailed plan of implementation with goals, activities, timelines and responsibilities for each activity. The state has outlined a plan. Among the components of this plan are: • Providing access to LEAs to data; • Convening user groups to provide detailed feedback on current functionality; • Providing access to all stakeholders; and • Using data for the purpose of influencing policy decisions and conducting research. A web portal is currently in beta testing and recommendations from parents, teachers, principals and focus groups will make recommendations by summer 2010. A data governance board will be convened to set and approve guidelines related to data access, privacy and security, adequacy of training and data model implementation. Other key items include developing extensive training and professional development to facilitate the use of data for classroom instruction and the purchase of laptops for LEA use in the classroom. The narrative does lack a detailed plan of implementation beyond the 2010 date above. As noted above, the P-20 longitudinal data system is in place and undergoing continuing development. RTTT funds will be used to expand and enhance the current data system. At that time the system will be available to key stakeholders. Performance measures for this have been provided. Testing will begin in 2012 with 100% implementation completed in 2013. It is expected that this will result in the improvement and support of such areas as policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation and overall effectiveness. The original date for developing this system was 2025. Funding will allow this to be completed within five years.</p>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	10
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(3) (i) There are several planned elements of the data system that link directly to the classroom to drive instruction. The plan lists the following: • Student alerts; • Actionable reports; • Education Career Action Plan; • Arizona Growth Model; • Formative assessments; and • Interim assessments. The planned use of these provides the teacher and principal with valuable information about students and teachers and provides a plan for correcting any deficiencies. Most are envisioned as starting in 2011 although the last two in the list above will not be in place until 2012. Implementation would be funded by RTTT and an SLDS grant. (3) (ii) ADE has devised training to insure that all teachers are capable of using the data systems which follows a train-the-trainers model. First assessments specialists are trained on the AEDW and dashboard tools. They then train the academic coaches and school-site liaison who in turn train the teachers. This is a simple model, but relies heavily on coaches and liaisons to develop professional development models to present this training to the teachers. (3) (iii) Arizona intends to make access to data available to researchers. An exact plan for this is not included outside of mentioning that they seek a close partnership with high education and other research institutions in which Arizona's education data is made transparent. It does not appear from the limited information surrounding this question that any compacts for future interaction have been agreed upon. This information and details of a specific plan has not been included. Projects and activities in this section enumerate the involvement of LEAs in using the data system that will be created. Especially relevant is the professional development for superintendents, curriculum directors and assessment directors and the use of information to inform instruction within their schools. A performance measure is included which provides for professional development through a Principal Data Institute and use in at-risk intervention and dropout prevention. Throughout the application, the longitudinal system plays a growing role in providing information that seeks to improve instruction and identify areas of greatest need.</p>		
Total	47	27

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
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(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	10
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(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(i) This section provides pertinent State Board Rules which address the criteria for the alternate routes to certification. The relevant rules that are presented have not been appended, leaving the reader to rely heavily on the statements in this section and refers to teachers but not principals. For instance, (1) it lists the types of institutions other than IHE that "may" offer programs; (2) the admission of candidates to these alternative routes does not indicate if the process is selective; (3) there is no indication as to whether a candidate may test out; (4) while field experiences are explained as school-based experiences, it does not clarify what support is offered to candidates; and (5) information regarding the award of credentials at the end of their field/school-based experiences refers only to the recommendation for credentials that are "appropriate." Overall, this section lacks the depth that would lead the reader to a better understanding of alternative program. (ii) Alternative routes that are in use are not identified. However, they do identify (in Appendix W) the nine institutions that are providing alternative pathways for teacher certification. No mention is made of principals completing programs or the total number of teachers and principals that completed each program or were certified statewide in the previous academic year. . (iii) This section provides information about pairing student teachers with high quality teachers, providing mentoring programs and meaningful incentives to get graduates into underserved schools. The ADE currently tracks the distribution of highly qualified teachers but no mention is made of how the process for monitoring, evaluating and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and preparing teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage. The Arizona Highly Qualified Teachers Equity Plan was approved by the USDOE in 2009 regarding plans to ensure poor and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other inexperienced or out-of-field teachers. This area lacks strength in not providing information pertaining to monitoring, evaluating and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage as well as preparing teachers and principals to fill these shortage areas.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	16
(i) Measuring student growth	5	2
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	4
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	1
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	9

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(i) The information does not provide a clear approach to measuring student growth. No mention is made of measuring it for each individual student. The narrative covers only grades 4-8 and requires that it be expanded to include all students. The approach lacks clarity. The changes alluded to here require more information on what will actually take place. While performance bands are expected to replace current tests, the use of the Arizona Growth Model has not been fully developed in conjunction with this. Much of the narrative covers what might happen and requires a focus on what the state plan will include providing detail on each of the previous comments noted in the preceding. (ii) Information is lacking as to how the design that will be implemented will provide rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation systems for both teachers and principals. If this is not to be a statewide evaluation system (as indicated in the text) and is left up to the individual LEA, it is difficult to see how the RTTT team will oversee the evaluations which will differ from district to district. Teachers were not indicated as being involved in the process that will take place in each LEA. Since 50% of their effectiveness is being based upon pupil performance, their participation in whatever process is required by the criteria. No mention is made of the principal involvement in the development of evaluations. This should be included. There is little evidence that it would use a multiple rating although it would be driven by student growth. (iii) There is no indication that these evaluations will be conducted annually for teachers and principals which is required by the criteria for this section. Information is lacking that would confirm that they have developed a design for annual evaluations of both teachers and

principals that include timely constructive feedback and provide teachers and principals with data on student growth for their students, classes and schools. (iv) (a) Evaluation/academic specialists play a key role in professional development. Effective classroom practice is their prime responsibility. They have a responsibility for developing and helping teachers in content delivery, lesson development or classroom management. This is missing a detailed plan for this to occur. This section requires specific information about the use of the evaluations in developing teachers and principals and how this support program would function. (iv) (b) A number of programs (Proposition 301, Career Ladder) are in place for compensating teachers and principals. (iv) (c) This section applies only to teachers and requires clarification to indicate if tenure will change from the current three year rule to one year. It suggests changes but does not provide any evidence for changes. To strengthen (c) some indication is required that the use of evaluations will inform decisions pertaining to granting tenure and/or full certification to teachers and principals using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent and fair procedures. Section (c) does not indicate this. (iv) (d) New legislation provides that a school district shall not adopt policies that provide employment retention priority for teachers based on tenure or seniority. This legislation should be provided in the Appendix. A more complete description of the process would be helpful to insure that decisions using these evaluations regarding teacher and principal termination are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent and fair procedures. Because this is left up to each LEA to determine, it is difficult to understand how the information that is used by the district will be applied to ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals. In regards to performance measures, Arizona does not collect this data. They have offered in its place a State Plan for the Collection of Teacher and Principal Data.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	6
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	4
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(i) In 2011-12 ADE will use data from the new evaluation systems to track distribution of effective teachers across LEA and school types and intervene when necessary. No mention is made of this data as applied to principals. They expect to use existing programs to increase the competency of teachers (Rodel Exemplary Teachers and Principals, Teach for America, NAU Teach, National Board Certification, Troops to Teachers) and provide highly qualified teachers in schools which are high-poverty. Since there is no definition offered of high-poverty schools, it is difficult to determine how this will take place until a definition is developed. The narrative does not describe a process as to how teachers and principals will be identified as ineffective in LEA schools or how the distribution of qualified teachers will take place in high minority or high poverty schools. Without defining high-minority and low-minority schools, the approach to this is difficult to assess. The performance measures section of this question have not been completed since the ADE does not collect this information. This section does not provide a process for ensuring the equitable distribution of teachers and principals. A definition of high-minority schools and low minority schools has not been supplied making it difficult to apply to this section. (ii) Information has not been provided for a plan that identifies hard-to-staff subject and specialty areas. Although the statements do identify some compensation strategies and mentoring, there is little else in this section outside of the programs listed in item (i). If there is information available regarding goals for the performance measures, it would be helpful to provide it here, since it gives the impression that the data is unknown and there is no process for identifying hard-to-staff/specialty areas.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	4
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(i) The ADE plans to use SLDS and RTTT funding to support a plan in the future to link student achievement and student growth data to the students' teachers and principals. They do not currently have the ability to do this. Once this plan is implemented and in force, the results will be publicly reported for the 2011-12 school year. No specific plan to link student achievement and student growth

to principals and teachers credentialing institutions and report this data publicly is offered in this section. No mention is made in (i) or (ii) of including principals. (ii) They do not have a link for this question and no baseline data or annual targets as a result. They will use RTTT funds to study Arizona's teacher preparation programs and recommend specific policy changes to enhance the state's teacher and principal preparation. Information is supplied for the number of teacher and principal credentialing programs as well as the total number of teachers and principals in the state. (i) As with other sections of the application, no meaningful information regarding a plan to support teacher/student connections is provided. Information on a workable future plan would strengthen this section. (ii) Without a well-detailed plan, the information here is ambiguous and gives the appearance that data has not been collected.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	2
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:		
(i) This is not so much a plan as a listing of persons who will be used to support teachers and principals. Goals, activities and timelines tied to those persons delivering services are necessary for seeing an actual plan that could be implemented. Since each LEA in the state has different needs at different times for different teachers and principals, it is difficult to see how the state will address these needs with limited personnel. (ii) The response does not provide a plan for measuring, evaluating and continuously improving the effectiveness of the supports in order to improve student achievement.		
Total	138	38

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
(1) This section provides a picture of the state's authority for intervening directly in failing schools. The state may intervene in some but not all low-performing schools. Schools and LEAs may be taken over for reason of poor academic performance or fiscal management. The narrative cites existing state law in describing its authority. Based on AIMS scores, growth in AIMS scores and ELL reclassification rates the state identifies schools as "underperforming." In this case, a Solutions Team is sent in to seek information and work with the school which is given three years to turnaround the school. If progress is not made, a public hearing is held on what corrective action may be taken. Between 2004 and 2008, 44 schools have been identified as failing. One third of the principals of these failing schools have been replaced upon ADE recommendation. An entire district may also be subject to takeover under this law. Failing schools may be assigned a governmental, not-for-profit or private organization to run the school. Failing charter schools are subject to charter revocation.		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	15
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	10
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
(2) (i) The ADE has identified schools as lowest-achieving. The primary instruments for this are AZ LEARNS and AYP. The AZ LEARNS formula is currently being revised to include the term "persistently lowest-achieving." The data concerning interventions is found in Appendix M. The lack of an actual plan to identify the persistently lowest-achieving schools and, at its discretion, any non-Title I eligible secondary schools that would be considered persistently low achieving is required for this section. (2) (ii) Fifty schools have used the transition model since 2005. Arizona intervened in 21 schools in SY 2008. Starting in SY 2010, four school interventions will take place each year. The narrative provides evidence of Arizona's use of the transformation model and states that under RTTT it will use the four		

intervention models provided by the notice. The state offers a number of strategies for turning around schools including emphasizing reading, Education and Career Action Plans, using the Governor's Distinguished Educators Corps, bonuses to Distinguished Teachers, continuation of the Specialists and Liaisons role in schools, after school programs and using the Advanced Placement Incentive Program. The response must supply a plan that includes at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines and responsible parties. It needs to go further than listing programs. A step-by-step approach toward identifying persistently low achieving schools, providing an intervention process and providing support to teachers and principals, and monitoring the success needs to be developed. The transformation model has been used exclusively in the state's turnaround efforts. It is not clear if any of the school districts have used the transformation model for 50% of their schools.

Total	50	20
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (i) The data and narrative support the increase in education support from 53.5% in 2008 to 59.5% in 2009. (ii) An equalized funding formula provides state funds to districts, but does not address high needs schools and districts.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	24
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i) Arizona does not limit the number of charter schools. The information here indicates that the state is no longer granting new charters. A clarification of this statement would assist the reader in understanding if a limit is being placed on new charters. It appears that the state has an extremely large number of charter schools in operation. As an aid to the reader, it would be helpful to know what percentage of the state's schools are charters. (ii) Title 15, Chapter 1, Article 8 of the Arizona Revised Statutes provides the responsibilities and regulations for charter schools. It provides for periodic review and evaluation, and outlines the requirements for reauthorization or renewal. The charter school authorizers have oversight and administrative responsibility for the charters they sponsor. (iii) Charters are funded in the same way as school districts are funded. (iv) The response does not indicate that funding for facilities is provided. From the information it appears that outside of naming them as public schools or relief from burdensome taxes on non-profit charters that this is not the case. (v) The information here consists of one sentence. It does not indicate how the state enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charters. The response is insufficient to determine if these schools are operated independently of LEAs or provide innovative programs.		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	1
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: Aside from mentioning a Technology Assisted Project Based Instruction Program, this response provides nothing regarding the laws, regulations or policies to support significant reforms outside of those already contained within the application.		
Total	55	33

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
Competitive Reviewer Comments: While there is mention of a STEM approach, it is not sufficient to carry out a comprehensive program that would prepare students for advanced study and careers in STEM. Plans to deal with Engineering and Technology are particularly absent. While mathematics and science are mentioned, treatment of an in-depth nature is missing. There are many gaps within the application that the preceding review illustrates. The plan must be strengthened with an approach that infuses STEM subjects throughout the curriculum not simply K-8. It must address the involvement of traditionally underserved students, especially women and minorities, in these courses and offer high quality, rigorous courses designed to prepare students for advanced post-secondary education or careers. Preparing teachers to teach STEM courses must be a priority and professional development, including familiarity with Project Lead the Way Courses, needs to be carefully planned for as part of both the preparation of new teachers as well as developing the skills of veteran teachers.		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		No
Absolute Reviewer Comments: There are many gaps in the needed information and in the detail needed to provide a comprehensive approach to the application. For each section, information is needed on goals, activities, timelines and the person/agency responsible for carrying out the plan. Over one-third of the LEAs are listed as not participating and less than a quarter of the teacher union representatives have signed on in support of this application. Additionally, only two letters of support were provided for the application. Many of the key organizations in the state are missing in support of this application. Without the widely-based support of the educational, political, business and other stakeholders in the state, it is difficult to see how a program that is left solely up to the LEAs to implement (with SEA support) will be able to carry out the plan.		
Total		0
Grand Total	500	232



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Arizona Application #1200-AZ2



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	29
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	18
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Arizona plans to build on an already existing reform agenda around all four reform areas. The agenda is comprehensive and ambitious in that it must tackle low student achievement, a system that, until now, has been based on "seat time," a largely rural and large geographic area, wide diversity and extreme poverty. The goals are clear; what is less certain is the path to achieving them, which appears more as separate pieces than a well-integrated program of improvement. There are many statements of vision and aspiration, but a lack of high quality plans with respect to how the state will arrive at its goals. In addition, it is often difficult to find the relevant responses to the specified criteria. There is no real plan presented as to how to decrease the achievement gap; the data presented concerning graduation rates is not clear; there is no real rationale presented for how the state has estimated the increases in graduation and college enrollments that will result from the funded initiatives; and there is no clarity around which, if any, of the turnaround models the state is committing to use. The application as a whole lacks a theory of change. While Arizona obtained commitments from LEAs representing the vast majority of students as well as those students in poverty, two significant potential barriers to active and committed participation of LEAs are indicated. First, there is an extremely low percentage of local teachers' unions signing on (32%) to the program. Second, there is a caveat that superintendents, while willing to implement the prescribed reforms, are allowed to do so "in a manner decided by the LEA." This makes it difficult to really ascertain the level of commitment that would otherwise be indicated by the fact that participating LEAs were required to agree that they would be willing to implement all of the elements of the plan. Arizona undertook a broad and impressive effort to involve a broad range of stakeholders and to inform stakeholders state-wide about the elements of the application. This does not necessarily translate into state-wide impact, however. Fewer than 60% of LEAs are committed to the plan, approximately 75% of school board presidents committed to the plan and less than 25% of unions are committed. Although those participating should translate to broad impact allowing the state to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gap, increase high school graduation and increase college enrollment, the question of whether statewide impact is more aspirational than likely cannot help but arise.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	11
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	8
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	3

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application describes a broad range of existing councils, teams, and resources that are already in existence and which are to provide leadership and capacity to direct the efficient operation of the RTTT programs. The plan to have each participating LEA designate a key contact who will communicate with the state-wide RTTT team will ensure direct connection and support. However, it is problematic that the team will exist largely outside of the Department of Education and that leadership will be by gubernatorial appointment. Given the history of local control, the plan wisely allows for discretion (with accountability) for how each LEA will use the funds and for which elements; however, this discretion means there may be a wide range of implementation, and implementation and coordination will demand a high level of coordination on the part of the state. It also raises a question around LEA commitment to implementation of all elements of the plan. In addition, although large portions of the work will be left to the discretion and responsibility of the LEAs, the budget provides very little funding to them for this purpose. The budgets do not demonstrate a clear connection between the use of funds and how the state will accomplish its plans and meet its targets. The budgets and budget narratives confirm that virtually all of the work will be carried out through contracts -- thus virtually assuring that after completion of the grant period much of the work will stop, without capacity having necessarily been built within the state. The application does not explain how the state will accomplish its plan and meet its targets, or whether there will be coordination, reallocation or repurposing of other funds. The fact that teachers and principals are represented on the task force committees does not necessarily translate to broad support, particularly given the weak union support among participating LEAs. Although there were a variety of stakeholders involved in the planning of RTTT and in the P-20 Coordinating Council, only two letters of support are provided in the application. Key stakeholder commitment that would be useful includes universities, partners in the STEM work, Native American communities, teacher organizations, foundations, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, etc.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	15
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	11

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Arizona's creation of new math and graduation standards, as well as participation in Common Core project demonstrate the ability to make progress in the area of standards. Evidence of progress on adopting high standards is less clear. With the creation of the Arizona Education Data Warehouse, Arizona has demonstrated progress in the effort to collect (and make accessible) longitudinal data. It appears that this effort has been completely funded by a US DOE grant and the additional work will be done with additional federal funding, if it is received. There is no indication that the state has put any state or other funding toward this effort. However, the growth model, which is an important part of an accessible longitudinal data system, does demonstrate partnership with and support from the Charter School Association. The fact that there is already a compensation for performance system in place is helpful. Arizona has a history of and authority for supporting failing schools; while several schools have been identified, the data indicates that the programs of support have not been all that successful. However, the state has sought funding in the past to tackle some of the most intransigent issues around achievement of ELLs and Native Americans. The application speaks to some movement in student outcomes; however, incomplete data is presented and very little analysis is provided of the graphs provided as evidence of the state's progress in improving student outcomes. Average student outcome gains are relatively small and although each individual subgroup is showing gains, the achievement gap remains a large and growing problem. The application asserts that gains are the result of individualized attention, growing comfort with AIMS, the system of intervention and certain initiatives. It is hard to know whether these are in fact the connecting tissue as the application attributes all of the gains to the same actions. Graduation rates are largely flat since 2003, which is not particularly impressive. It is understandable that rates might decline with the implementation of graduation requirements, however, allowing students to graduate with lower scores for several years,

as Arizona has done, keeps the graduation percentages up but does not indicate student success in meeting the new standards.

Total	125	55
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	33
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	15
(ii) Adopting standards	20	18

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Arizona is participating in the Common Core initiative, in which a majority of states are participating. The standards are not included in the application, therefore it is not possible to confirm that they will be internationally benchmarked and will help students be prepared for college and careers. The plan demonstrates progress toward adopting the Common Core standards, as well as the legal process moving toward adoption. However, the process makes clear that adoption of the standards still has several hurdles before it can be assured, in particular SBE making a final determination only after careful examination of the standards and the results of public comment.

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

10

10

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In addition to working on college readiness standards and assessments, Arizona is working with two consortia developing a common assessment system aligned with the Common Core Standards. One of these includes 36 states and the other 13.

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

20

14

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application describes a plan for transitioning to new standards and assessment; however, it is quite general and lacks specificity. The plan includes LEAs hiring academic coaches; however, there is neither any specificity about what the coaches will do nor is there allowance for the coaches in the budgets. The budget includes assessment specialists prior to the time when the assessments will have been developed. The plan calls for teachers to develop the assessments, but there is no detail with respect to how teachers will be supported to know how to create them. The plan is strengthened by the fact that it is based on successful experience, but there is a lack of analysis demonstrating how it responds to that experience. Allowing each participating LEA flexibility in terms of which pieces it needs to support and which it already has in place will likely make the transition more acceptable to the LEAs. Ensuring that interim assessments created by participating LEAs are shared with all LEAs will also leverage the full range of LEA capabilities.

Total

70

57

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application describes the presence of seven of 12 America COMPETES elements.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state's plan to engage keys stakeholders to help design the system and to ensure favorable interface is sensible; however, it lacks goals, activities and time-lines. The allocation of RTTT funding among the state, participating LEAs and schools is sensible and should allow for access to the technology to stakeholders throughout the state. It is possible that access among the rural population could be enhanced by providing internet access to points other than the schools so that parents and community members who are not actually at the school can be assured access. The application does not address how the data will support decision makers in continuous improvement of efforts.</p>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	10
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: In addition to the dashboard, which should put significant data in front of teachers and principals, the proposed student alerts, actionable reports, ECAPs and AGMs will be effective in putting important data in front of parents and students. The formative and interim assessments are particularly important at the school level, and it is noteworthy that some of these tools are already in use. The three-tier train the trainer system contemplated by the application may effectively provide both training and professional development that will enable teachers and principals to use the data systems to support continuous instructional improvement. However, the only professional development specified is to support teachers in understanding how to use the data for classroom instruction. There is no description of how the trainers will be trained. The application mentions the importance of access to data for researchers and that the key change will be to provide researchers with access to the local instructional improvement system, but there is no plan described at all. There is no information about how it will be done, how information about the data systems – how they work, what they do, etc. will be provided to the research community. There is no indication that researchers will participate in the design of the system or that such a system will meet their needs.</p>		
Total	47	27

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	10
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: The application describes state statutes that allow for and govern alternative routes to certification for teachers. The statute allows for certification by institutions of higher education and other providers. However, it appears that those alternative certification programs that are being used are all located within IHEs. Requirements for approval include demonstration of selection criteria, school-based experiences and the same level of certification. However, ongoing support such as mentoring is not yet a requirement, nor is limiting the amount of coursework, except in the Career & Technical Education teachers. The application does not describe the elements of the alternative routes to certification programs. It does not appear that any the programs are for principals. The description of programs designed to get stronger teachers in front of the most challenged students does not speak to the criterion of a process for monitoring, evaluating and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage. There is no process for identifying shortage areas, or locations, for teachers or principals. Once an identification is made, then programs like the Rodel Exemplary Teacher program come into place to respond to the shortages identified.</p>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	29

(i) Measuring student growth	5	3
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	7
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	14

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

While the state has a plan for measuring student growth, based on AIMS and later on common summative assessments, there is no discussion about how this will be put into place, what roles will be filled by which actors, what kind of targets will be used, etc. The plan for evaluation system development includes a sensible time-table and creative accountability measures to ensure that LEAs design and implement evaluation systems that use multiple criteria and, for participating LEAs, have at least 50% of the evaluation based on student growth. It is unclear whether LEAs will have the capacity to develop these sophisticated systems and, if not, if there are funds provided to them for this purpose. The application does not describe how each LEA's evaluation system itself will be designed; while this is appropriate given that each LEA will be doing its own design, there is no evidence of a plan that each evaluation be designed with teacher and principal involvement. Most of the discussion is more relevant to teacher evaluation; there is no evidence presented or discussed about the process for designing or the contents of the evaluation system for principals. There is a plan, complete with designation of support providers at the state and local level, for supporting educators to be able to include meaningful and constructive feedback, including the use of data on student growth. However, while the plan indicates that the professional development will include best practices around the frequency of observation, there does not appear to be any requirement that the evaluation for all teachers or principals be annual. There is a carefully constructed plan in which evaluation/academic specialists will support LEAs with professional development in order help teachers and principals translate data - including data derived from the evaluations - into improved practice. The application states that individual LEAs will also be supported by specialists and the PBC Team to ensure that their evaluation systems are correctly used and aligned to make decisions regarding compensating and promoting teachers and principals. However, there is no real plan or details as to how this will be done. Arizona has recently enacted new legislation which require LEAs to adopt policies ensuring that the removal of teachers and principals be based on the evaluation system and follow a process of providing support and probation. Given the history and complications of Arizona's experience with performance-based compensation, the plan for integrating the new assessment and new evaluation systems appears to be well thought-out. The lack of commitment by the unions may present a problem here, and the application does not address how the LEAs will be supported in overcoming this crucial barrier. There is no plan describing how LEAs will transition from existing performance-based compensation systems to the newly developed system. The strengthening of the Rodel Exemplary Teachers Initiative and the Governor's Distinguished Educator Corps appear to be creative mechanisms to promote and retain both teachers and educators, though it is not clear that selection of those in these programs will be based on assessment under the new evaluation systems. It is not clear what the performance targets are for the state's plan for collection of teacher and principal evaluation data. If the time-line is meant to be applicable to all LEAs, given the very low support from most local teacher unions the time-line is not realistic.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	6
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	4
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Arizona correctly looks to the track records of several programs that are already supporting the more equitable placement of teachers for decisions to expand their capacity. However, the existing process tracks numbers and placement of teachers, but not necessarily "effective" teachers. With the exception of the Distinguished Educator Corps, all of the programs presented in the application focus on

teachers and not on principals. Allowing LEAs flexibility to design their own methods for addressing the inequitable placement of teachers recognizes the history of local control, but given that one of the areas of most pressing need is LEAs that have both Title I and non-Title I schools and given the lack of commitment of unions, this may not be realistic. Perhaps as a reflection of this approach, there are no targets for ensuring equitable distribution of teachers and principals. This section does not present the data (or the source of data) that will be used to determine where the highly effective and where the less effective teachers and principals are currently placed. The state's plan to have LEAs respond to the problem of equitable distribution of teachers and principals is consistent with its overall plan for designing improvement; however, the plans and budgets do not provide evidence that the LEAs will have capacity, support or funding to do this. This plan - increasing TFA, directing funds to NAU Teach and offering a K-8 science endorsement - is not a detailed plan. The application suggests the kinds of incentives that are used in the allocation of teachers and principals to high poverty schools, such as compensation, teaching and learning environments, professional development, etc. would be appropriate to increase the number of effective teachers teaching hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas. However, there is no discussion of real planning here whatsoever. In addition, the required performance measures (targets provided for the placement of highly effective teachers, science and math teachers, etc.) are not provided.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	6
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There is no detail to the plan to link student outcomes to specific teachers and to connect those teachers with the professional preparation programs. And while the application states that there is only one remaining step --the very important ability to link student and teacher data -- the state does not commit to making the link, as required by this criterion. There is no evidence of a plan for what will be done once the link is made, if it is in fact made. There is no plan for how or where the annual reports will be communicated. Nor is there a plan for how to ensure that potential program applicants make selections based on the information. The plan to commission a study of preparation programs with recommendations for specific policy changes is commendable; however, it is only the first step, and it is not a plan. The application assumes that making the data available publicly will lead to future teachers and principals using it in order to select which preparation program they choose; there is no evidence presented that this will in fact occur.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	8
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Arizona's plan includes a range of new and existing personnel in specific roles designed to support principals and teachers to understand, access, and make use of the broad range of data that will inform teachers and be the majority of their evaluations. However, outside of listing the people and their roles, there is no actual plan presented. In addition, there is very little clarity around the roles of the various people included. If the various positions all work in conjunction with each other, and the LEAs are not confused by the different roles each of the support providers play, it is possible that this plan will be successful in providing high level professional development around the use of these data. However, given the fact that each LEA is developing its own evaluation system, it is not clear that there will be appropriate support available to each. While the focus on use of data is admirable, and required, there is short shrift given to the other areas of professional development that are useful for both principals and teachers. There is no detail whatsoever for the plan of how the various professional supports will be measured, evaluated and continuously improved.

Total	138	59
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
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(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: State Department of Education can intervene directly in both schools and LEAs based on specified criteria and processes. However, the schools in which the state can intervene are not the persistently lowest-achieving schools defined in the notice.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	21
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	16
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: Arizona already identifies each school by AYP and AZ LEARNS, and is in the process of revising the AZ LEARNS formula to include the definition of "persistently lowest-achieving" school. Thus, it has a high-quality plan to identify persistently lowest-achieving schools. The State's plan for what kind of support and guidance it will give to LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools (as well as other underperforming schools) is comprehensive and provides goals and activities and designates responsible parties. However, it does not include a time-line for implementation of the plan beyond turning around four schools per year. The commitment to use of the four turn-around models is confusing. In one place it appears all of the models are available to the LEAs with persistently lowest achieving schools and in another it appears that the state will be using the transformation model. However, the description of the transformation model the state appears to be using does not fully align with the definition provided in the notice, in that it does not include replacement of the principal. With the exception of the Distinguished Educator Corps there is no plan for finding or preparing leaders who are capable of turning around or re-starting what was a persistently lowest-achieving school. It is also not clear how the state will bring those LEAs with less proficiency up to speed by holding them accountable for providing the training and professional development necessary to build the capacity. The state has experience in intervening in failing schools, but the lessons learned do not seem to be well analyzed.</p>		
Total	50	26

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: It is noteworthy that despite an extensive reduction in total revenues available to the state, the percentage of funds supporting education increased from 53.5% to 59.5%. The district funding formula ensures equitable access to budget capacity and revenues and is based, in part, on student characteristics and on the taxable property valuation per pupil. The adjustments do not appear to correlate with the RTTT definitions of high-need LEAs. In addition, there appears to be no evidence of policies that lead to equitable funding within LEAs, between high-poverty schools and other schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	28
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: There is no cap on the number of charter schools and, although there is no specific provision of law cited, the application asserts that there are no restrictions on the types of charter schools whatsoever. Arizona's charter laws provide clear guidance regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize and close charter schools. They do not encourage charter schools to serve student populations similar to local district student populations (however, given that</p>		

many of the charters are in rural areas or on reservations, this probably occurs). The application provides information on the number of charter school applications made, approved, denied and closed over the past five years. However, the application does not specify the reason that charter schools have been closed. The application provides detailed information about the state's approach to charter school funding and how it compares with funding of traditional schools. Charter schools in Arizona receive equitable funding; as compared with district schools, charter schools end up with more per student and more flexibility with respect to how the funds can be used. State law does not prohibit charter schools from applying for and receiving federal dollars. They receive a proportionate share of federal funding flowing to the state. The application does not provide evidence of how the state supports charter schools with regard to providing funding for facilities, assistance with acquisition, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports. The application does describe certain recent legislation that has equalized the zoning requirements for charter schools and traditional public schools. In addition, a recent change has reduced the property tax burden for non-profit charter schools. However, there is no evidence or description about what burdens are placed on charters run by for-profit organizations. There is also no information provided about other facilities support that may be provided by the state. The application says that LEAs are free to operate innovative, autonomous public schools but there is no evidence presented that any of the examples provided are innovative, autonomous schools, as defined in the notice of application.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	1
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The TAPBI (now Arizona Online Instruction) program is innovative, reform-minded and responsive to public demand and Arizona's rural students; however, there is no evidence that it has increased student achievement, graduation rates or resulted in other important outcomes.		
Total	55	37

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
Competitive Reviewer Comments: There does not appear to be a sustained emphasis throughout the application on STEM. There is no high quality overall plan; rather, it appears that there are scattered programs in STEM-related areas. There is no evidence of a course of study or of a link between the STEM initiatives and the rest of the application initiatives. While it is noteworthy that there is a significant connection with STEM-related business, industry and resources that Arizona plans to take advantage of in its effort to increase the capabilities of teachers and the opportunities for students, given the extent of the resources there does not seem to be a well thought out plan of how to use them. The use of TFA to bring in teachers with math and science content may be effective, but it is a rather short-term solution given the average tenure of TFA teachers.		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		No
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The state's application, while ambitious, is neither comprehensive nor coherent in addressing all of the four education reform areas and the State Success Factors Criteria. The application presents separate		

initiatives that do not fit within a systemic approach to education reform. LEA commitment is weak, as is evidence of stakeholder support. The state has designed a series of programs, most of which will be supported by consultants, who will leave at the completion of the grant period. This will not develop the capacity of educators throughout the large, rural state (or within the state Department of Education) to continue the work beyond the period of the grant. Student outcome data presented is incomplete and confusing, and the state's plan to improve them appears largely to be aspirational and very general; throughout the application there is a lack of specificity in the plans. Particularly given the importance of working with LEAs and holding them accountable for their own individual work, these plans require time-lines, designations of responsibility, etc. The application describes a system in which LEAs are given a tremendous amount of authority to implement the RTTT initiatives, but without corresponding financial or human resources. Throughout the application, there is a description of goals and vision, but the state does not seem to have put its own or its stakeholders' support into realizing the potential of the vision.

Total		0
Grand Total	500	261



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Arizona Application #1200AZ-3



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	20
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	2
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	13
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: A1i - The introductory section of the application articulates a plan for reform but a number of the descriptions seem unrelated to the rest of the plan. A1ii - The MOU and Scope-of Work documents are included in the Appendix but are not similar to what the notice provided. The number of LEAs signing the agreement represents over 87% of all K-12 students and 93% of K-12 students in poverty. However, only 74% of Board presidents signed the application and a very low percentage (21%) of local teacher union leaders signed causing concern about implementation of the reforms related to improving teacher effectiveness. A1iii - The percentage of LEAs participating is only about 60% of the statewide total and represents 87% of Arizona students so the impact statewide may likely be only moderate. The plan includes 10 yr. goals for each of the four required areas; however, the fact that their targets are set in terms of being "in the lower or midrange of the top tier of states nationally" seems to indicate that their goals are quite modest. The graphs in Appendix B are not very informative. The targets for some of the subgroups are very modest (low-SES, LEP, and students with IEPs) and in some instances the gap increases. It is not clear from the application that the state definition of graduation rate is the same as the one in the notice and the estimation of increases in college enrollment and success are not based on actual data and appear to be over-optimistic estimations given that they are unrelated to any clear criteria. The contrast between what the goals would look like with and without RTTT funds is not included.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	5
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	4
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	1
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: A2i - The plan describes an appointed RTTT team that will provide direct oversight and management of the RTTT funds and activities; they will be the key contacts for maintaining communication with participating LEAs. A major concern is that this team is not integrated with existing state department of education structures. The P-20 Council is described as providing leadership to the RTTT effort but the composition of this council and the roles and responsibilities it has are not clearly defined. County ESAs are mentioned but their role is not articulated either. The supports described are so vague and general that they have no substantive meaning. The plan indicates that infrastructure that was put in place to write the application will be leveraged to provide effective and efficient operations and processes for the grant management but there were no specific details provided. No details regarding the use of the RTTT funds in conjunction with other funding sources was provided. The plan for</p>		

continuing the RTTT reform efforts after funding stops was also very general. A2ii - This section was very weak - the application only includes 2 letters of support, the constituents that these letters represent is not clear, so it is difficult to determine whether they represent a large group of stakeholders but clearly does not include representation from teacher unions and/or associations, administrative unions or associations, school board associations, elected officials, STEM collaborative agencies, higher institutions, and the description of support from other critical stakeholders was minimal.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	9
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	5
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
A3i - The plan adequately describes previous state efforts in the areas of developing standards and assessments, the development of statewide longitudinal data systems, performance-based compensation, support for low-performing schools, and the development of charter schools. The evidence of the positive impact of these actions on student achievement is minimal. A3ii - The documentation for student achievement was poor - appendices only contained charts and graphs representing student achievement on the state assessments for elementary reading and high school mathematics and NAEP results for 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics. The graphs representing the achievement rates of the different subgroups were difficult to read. Graduation rates are only minimally described in the narrative. The explanations of the connections between state action and student gains was minimal.		
Total	125	34

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	33
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	15
(ii) Adopting standards	20	18
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
B1i - Arizona is participating in the Common Core Standards Initiative consortium (which includes 48 States) that is developing and disseminating standards in ELA and mathematics (as defined by the notice). The MOU is included as an appendix in the application, but a copy of the draft standards is not. B1ii - A description of the legal process for adopting statewide standards is included in the application. The application states that the SBE "has committed to work towards the adoption of the CCS by August 2, 2010" but there is no assurance that this will happen.		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	8
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
The application indicates that Arizona is participating in two assessment consortia - one with 36 states participating (although no signed MOU for this consortium is included) and one that appears to have 13 states participating. It appears that both intend to develop high-quality assessments as defined in the notice that will align with the state standards. It is not clear how Arizona will align these two assessment systems.		

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	7
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The application indicates that the state has had experience with implementing new standards and includes technical assistance and professional development. However, the description of the technical assistance and professional development to support the implementation of the new CCS is very general and lacks much of the specific detail necessary to ensure that the transition is effective. The technical assistance is only described in very general terms and does not indicate specific services or products that will support schools. The application indicates that there are 4 goals for a professional development plan and states them, but there is no implementation plan or indication of what professional development activities will take place and when. County Academic Teams are mentioned but their roles and responsibilities are not defined. An online tool for developing formative assessments will be developed as part of the RTTT effort, but the actual diagnostic assessments will be created by teachers, and the professional development is only described as a train-the trainer model with no additional details. The plan describes the need for supports for students at transition points in their educational career and the use of RTTT funds to address this, but the description of services as a system of support is difficult to understand. The articulated plan is not a cohesive system of support for a successful transition to the new standards nor does it have budget expenditures that would support a number of the actions described (for example, coaching).</p>		
Total	70	48

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: Seven of the 12 America Competes elements are documented as complete.</p>		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	1
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: The application describes the current access that stakeholders currently have to the State's longitudinal data system which includes parents, teachers and administrators and the intent to make it more broadly accessible. However, there is no coherent plan to accomplish this that includes goals, activities, timelines and responsible parties.</p>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	5
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: C3i - The plan describes seven components of accountability that would be important aspects in a local instructional improvement system. However, there is no plan for developing these components that includes actionable steps and responsible parties. C3ii – The plan generally describes a train-the-trainer model of professional development that includes assessment specialists, academic coaches and school-site liaisons, although the criteria for each of these roles is not articulated and the specific content of the various professional development activities (other than “how to use the data for classroom instruction”) is not defined. C3iii – The plan states that researchers will be given access to student achievement data on a more frequent basis but does not articulate any details of a plan for how this will happen</p>		
Total	47	20

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	6
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>D1i – The legal, statutory and regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to teacher certification are described in the plan and meet most of the notice's criteria. None are described for principals. D1ii – The list of alternative certification programs operating in Arizona is listed in Appendix W. However, the elements of each program, the number of teachers successfully completing each program at each institution the previous year and the total number of teachers and principals certified statewide is missing from the information and makes it difficult to accurately assess these programs. The information provided was very unclear. D1iii – The application states that Arizona has a process for the state to track the distribution of highly qualified teachers against poverty quartiles, and in March 2009 they contracted with a consulting company to conduct an equity study, the results of which have not yet been reported. It mentions several specific programs that intend to help get effective teachers into underserved schools but there is no data to indicate the effectiveness of these programs. No information regarding these same issues for principals was included.</p>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	11
(i) Measuring student growth	5	2
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	2
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	2
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	5
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>It should be noted that for D(2) none of the performances measures were completed. D2i - The application states that Arizona is developing a definition of student growth that is based on changes in AIMS scores by bands of achievement. However, the details of how this would be implemented, including what assessments would be used in grades/subjects without an AIMS test, are vague. D2ii – The process for designing and implementing rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals as described in the plan will be decentralized – that is each LEA will be developing their own system, with the requirement that at least 50% of the evaluation being based on student growth. Given the lack of teacher union support for the RTTT plan, this will likely be difficult to achieve. Additionally the plan indicates that each LEA plan will be 'held accountable' for the quality of their evaluations on the basis of student achievement, but the details of how the quality of the evaluations will be assessed (other than general student achievement data) and consequences are not described – both of which are a significant weakness of the plan. Differentiated ratings are not described in the plan. D2iii – The state plan generally describes the annual evaluations process for teachers and principals to include timely and constructive feedback, including data on student growth, but provides little detail since each LEA will be developing their own system. The state will encourage participating LEAs to "hire evaluation specialists" to help them develop strong evaluations, with no indication of State support or direction as to who these people might be or what would qualify them to be evaluation specialists. D2iv – Because the Arizona plan for developing evaluation systems is decentralized the state cannot describe the systems that each LEA will design and therefore, this section of the application was very weak. It does not describe how the evaluation would be used to develop teachers (principals are minimally mentioned) – it indicates that the "evaluation/academic specialists" will help teachers with professional development. The plan does not indicate how evaluations will be used in compensating, promoting or granting tenure to teachers. New legislation that allows the evaluation system to be used in employment retention decisions has been passed; however, because each LEA system is likely to be different, it is not clear that these decisions will be equitable across LEAs.</p>		

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	3
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	2
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	1
(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: D3i – It is not clear in the application that the Arizona plan defines highly effective teachers, high-poverty or high-minority schools as the notice does, with little attention paid to highly effective principals. It describes alternative certification programs and a two incentive programs, not all of which include provisions for highly effective teachers and educators to go to high-needs schools, so it is unclear the impact these programs would have on this goal. The plan defers to LEAs to develop plans for enhancing equitable distribution of teachers and little direction is provided as to how this will happen – which is a distinct weakness of this plan. D3ii – The actions in this section describe directing RTTT funding to expand existing programs that target increasing the number of teachers who are certificated to teach science, mathematics and special education but are so briefly described (three sentences) that it could not be described as a high-quality plan. Performance measures for this section are not completed.		
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	1
(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: D4i – Other than indicating that an annual report that highlights the overall academic performance and student growth for graduates of each approved program will be published for the 2011-2012 school year (and publishing data doesn't ensure enrollment), no plan for implementing this is articulated. D4ii – The plan describes commissioning an outside agency to study this problem and recommend specific policy changes – which is not an articulated plan that meets the criteria in the notice.		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	3
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: D5i – The supports for teachers and principals are briefly described in this section. The application only describes general roles for specialists to provide professional development to support teachers in implementing this plan. Those are academic specialists, assessment specialists, academic coaches, evaluation specialists and school-site liaisons; but because of the latitude granted LEAs in determining their needs and implementing their plans, it is not known how many and which of these individuals will be working in each district and what services they will provide. A mentoring program is mentioned but not clearly defined. D5ii – There is no plan articulated for measuring, evaluating and continuously improving the effectiveness of the supports.		
Total	138	24

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The application describes that the State has legal and statutory authority to intervene in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs; however, the State definition of failing schools (as described by the State in the application) is different than that of lowest-achieving schools in the notice.		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	14
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5

(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	9
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
E2i – The application identifies sixteen persistently lowest-achieving schools and describes that the State definition will be changed to align to that of the notice. E2ii – The plan has only identified transformation as a possible school intervention model for turning around its persistently lowest-achieving schools, and does not describe that all of the transformation elements in the notice will be implemented (such as replacing the principal and/or at least 50% of the teachers). The state assumes that the other school intervention models will not be needed, which is a significant weakness of this portion of the application. The transformation model is also the only one that has been used by Arizona in the past as described in the application.		
Total	50	19

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	5
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
F1i – The percentage of the total revenues available to the state in 2009 was greater than that of 2008. F1ii – As described in the application the State policies for equitable distribution of funds does not appear to consider high-need and high-poverty school criteria.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	28
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
F2i – The State has charter school laws that do not prohibit or effectively inhibit charter school development or charter school enrollment. F2ii – The application articulates the State laws regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable and reauthorize and close charter schools. Generally, student achievement is listed as one factor for renewal or closure. There is no specific mention of high-need students. As indicated in the proposal, Arizona has closed charter schools in the past. F2iii – The plan describes that charter schools in Arizona receive equitable funding at the same level as traditional school districts. F2iv – The plan describes that charter schools and school districts in Arizona receive equitable finding and that those funds could be used for facilities but does not assure that facility funding specifically is provided to charter schools. The state does not impose any facility-related requirements for charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools. F2 v – The plan indicates that the State allows LEAs to operate innovative autonomous schools such as extended year schools, virtual schools, magnet schools and technology-based schools.		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	1
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
The application describes a distance learning program which only minimally meets the criteria for an innovative program and no connection between that program and increased student achievement is described.		
Total	55	34

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The State has only minimally described STEM initiatives throughout the overall plan and therefore this Competitive Preference Priority appears to be more of an afterthought than an integral part of the proposed reform effort. Also, the application does not address the needs of underrepresented groups, which is a significant weakness.		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		No
Absolute Reviewer Comments: This application does not comprehensively or coherently address any of the four education reform areas and therefore a credible plan for implementing reform not evident. The description of many essential elements of the application, including using definitions of the notice, connecting actions to increases in student achievement, and providing performance measures are missing or are very vague. Lack of stakeholder support (particularly that of unions) is a substantial weakness, particularly given that the State is 'decentralizing' decisions regarding (that is leaving it up to LEAs to define) many aspects of the plan implementation such as teacher and principal professional development, evaluations, and equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals to high-poverty schools. The application substantially falls short of the requirements to ensure real reform that will result in increased student achievement.		
Total		0

Grand Total	500	179
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Arizona Application #1200AZ4



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	32
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	2
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	22
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: 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, but does not establish a clear and credible path to achieving these goals. While the application does provide evidence of state actions to set foundational legal/policy conditions and to foster coordinated reform via task forces, legislation and coordinating bodies, there is not a clear and credible path described by which strategy will affect the dramatic changes sought. The relation of conditions/causes behind present performance levels to the selection of identified reform levers (e.g., key transitions) remains unclear, as is the means by which those levers will yield change on the ground. Further, while LEA MOU and SOW language is strong, the generative and/or distributed nature of "extensive stakeholder input" is unclear. With 93% of all K-12 students in poverty represented by the LEA's signing up, the absence of nearly 80% of local teachers' union leaders signatures raises questions regarding commitment breadth/depth, as does the limited nature of state associational support letters. The basis for achievement projections (including comparison state) is unclear, especially given several dramatic sub-group achievement growth projections (e.g., Native American 4th grade math nearly tripling) against prior performance patterns, including some gap growth.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	8
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	6
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	2
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: The plan indicates significant levels of positive support and coordination at upper state levels (RTTT Team, P-20 Coordinating Council, Task Forces), which promises good and close collaboration at the state level. The level of leadership and coordination capacity at intermediate and lower levels is less clear, including the role of county ESAs, given their "particularly large role in professional development." Limited evidence is offered of operational capacity, particularly as distinguished from prior processes for which capacity is claimed (e.g., grant writing). Little evidence of impact on ongoing administrative or technical assistance operations or structures is provided, as much of the proposed effort appears parallel/adjunct to current processes, not transformative. Clear attention is evident to the post-grant "funding cliff," though the ability to balance flexibility and local control ("LEAs can invest as necessary to complement existing resources") with a coherence based on the state plan remains unclear. Further details are warranted to explain how the transition beyond the grant will attain significant capacity with which to avoid significant discontinuity when grant-funded personnel "can</p>		

leave." For example, presuming that staff capacity has been enhanced by external technical assistance, how will ongoing structures or processes continue that growth and/or allow for further adaptation of practice (instructional, curricular, etc.) to obtain continued performance improvements; what will be different post-external support that will produce different results. Integration of STEM and Native American structures and their specific roles within this application's strategies remain unclear, as do the degree to which existing state plans and funds will support the proposed plan. Budget information is provided, both narrative and project-level, is limited, with unclear alignment to plan design. Further evidence of broad stakeholder support is needed to understand the level of support among teachers and principals, given only two letters in the application, neither from such groups.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	15
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: The application gives evidence of considerable activity in each of the four education reform areas ("assurances") over the last several years, citing a wide range of programs, initiatives and policy directions. The nature of "substantial test changes" affecting AIMS scores, just prior to when proficiency became a graduation requirement, remains unclear from the application, as does the impact of phasing down the "augmentation" option. Appendix N trend line implications for turnarounds, e.g., are unclear given those AIMS changes. Evidence relating state actions to test score trends unclear or absent for trends cited in narrative. Very limited progress on student outcomes evident (e.g., NAEP 8th grade math proficiency overall, AIMS elementary reading overall, AIMS HS math; no appendix provided for AIMS HS reading nor AIMS elem math, nor NAEP 4th grade math nor 8th grade reading), with some negative trends on gaps (e.g., NAEP 4th grade reading proficiency, NAEP 8th grade math proficiency; Appendix O, P respectively). Some progress post-2005 in AIMS elementary reading, especially among least-performing sub-groups (Appendix Q), and in sub-group performance in AIMS HS math (Appendix R). Graduation rates have essentially returned to 2003 levels after several years of decline. No evidence provided to indicate how policy changes regarding graduation during this period might affect the data provided. Net -- student outcomes show only very modest gains with evidence of sub-group gap growth from NAEP data.</p>		
Total	125	55

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	35
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	15
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: The application indicates that the state participates in a consortium of 47 states developing and adopting K-12 standards, as defined in the application notice, and that this consortium includes a significant number of states. The state commits to and shows progress toward adopting the resulting common set of K-12 standards by August 2, 2010, targeting May 24, 2010, for the state board to approve the new standards. The two timelines presented for the adoption of standards in the state require some further clarification. For example, one timeline indicates that the public draft will be presented the first week of February, with feedback due by February 19th and a final draft by the end of February/early March; however, another timeline indicates that the transition plan will be presented to the state board of education only on February 22nd, with a posting of the draft standards online for</p>		

public comments on March 22nd, targeting May 24th to present a final draft to the state board of education.

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

10

10

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The State has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments by working jointly to develop and to implement common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards. The state participates in two assessment consortia, one led by West Virginia and Maine involving 36 states, and one led by Florida involving 13 states. MOUs are provided in the appendix. The state is also applying for funding through the Race to the Top assessment program.

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

20

8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The state provides a 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 these standards. The state provides evidence in its rollout plan of collaboration with the State's institutions of higher education, aligning high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements with the new standards and assessments, which should facilitate the transition of students across institutions. The state intends to "round out" its system of state assessments, for example, building K-2 and 9th grade assessments and improving links to community college placement exams and state assessments; such measure should provide more consistent information about student performance to both students and receiving institutions that serve them. The state will assist LEAs in providing supporting documents regarding the new standards and assessments, which will provide a consistent source for the transition in standards. The state also plans for supporting instructional change linked to the new standards/assessments by a combination of formative and interim assessments, local coaching, and train-the-trainer models. Several concerns affect the quality of the plan provided. Regarding assessment development, the timeline and integration of the online formative assessments, an "important part" of the plan, appears problematic. In terms of timing, it would appear that formative assessment development would start first, as assessment specialists would be hired for 2010-11, nearly two years prior to the completion of the summative assessments, and a bit more for the interim assessments. As the formative assessments are meant to be teacher-generated and not linked to summative or interim assessments, it is unclear how they will be consistent with and supportive of these new assessments standards. [Later in the plan, the state indicates that formative assessments would roll out initially by spring 2012, and then more completely in 2012-13; please see section C of this application. This would raise the question of the role of assessment specialists in 2010-11.] Further, the relationship of the new assessment system to instructional practice and to accountability warrants further development. For example, clearly the formative assessments intend to provide feedback on student work closest to classroom practice; teachers develop them and they presumably provide the most directly "actionable" feedback to inform instruction. Yet this information will exist apart from the interim assessments that would be the basis for providing "appropriate intervention/resources to get students on track." The presumption of alignment between formative and interim would appear to require further justification, as experience in the field does not necessarily support this, given the two assessment's different purposes, development, implementation, and audiences. The professional development portion of the plan appears undeveloped, particularly components such as the "train-the-trainer" model, with little information as to who would develop this and/or how quality would be assured. How the plan will leverage existing structures, such as the County Academic Teams, is unclear. The role of "borrowed" instructional leaders, while building a positive link between strong field practice and the design and delivery of professional development, raises further questions about the continuity/capacity of those districts from which these professionals will be absent. Additionally, how local capacity will be built rapidly, beyond reference to the train the trainer model, with the limitations of such models, and unspecified coaching appears unclear. The strong role of LEAs in the design of professional

development offers the possibility of useful adjustment to local conditions and context; how that will be balanced with the state's interest in moving student performance along the lines of the new standards and assessments is not well described. The aim of ending social promotion appears unclear within the context of this transition support plan, and the reasons for limiting the implementation to 3rd grade are not developed.

Total	70	53
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: The application describes compliance with 7 of the 12 America COMPETES Act data system elements, though with no documentation in appendices.		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: The application provides a plan to provide user-friendly data from the state's longitudinal systems. The plan provides greater evidence of broad stakeholder input in instrument design, though role of classroom- and school-level practitioners at the governance level is unclear. The development plan timeline appears ambitious, particularly given the need to integrate with the new assessments.		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	8
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state provides a plan to increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems in an effort to provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness. The state plans to provide support to participating LEAs and schools that are using instructional improvement systems in providing effective training (short-term technical skills) and ongoing professional development to teachers, principals and administrators on how to use these systems and the resulting data to support continuous instructional improvement. The state commits to making the data from instructional improvement systems 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. The state's plan recognizes the limited use of the current data system, and provides for improved dashboard displays of student data, allowing a much more integrated and useful picture of student progress to teachers, principals and administrators. Automating compliance requirements addresses a significant time demand of administrators and supports their transition toward a more instructional focus in their daily routine, and the time with which to engage in data-informed discussions with colleagues. The effort to build "actionable reports" recognizes the time demands of teachers and administrators, and the need for automated access to prepared analysis of student data. The distinction between training and professional development usefully identifies two related but different aspects of the plan. Concerns remain regarding how the data system will provide an integrated picture across datasets, and how it will inform instructional change. In particular, as the formative assessments are to be generated by individual teachers, how they will link to interim and summative assessments is not clear; they do not appear to be designed to do so, and yet are closest to the classroom practice level where change is sought. Further, multiple causes of error often lie behind the same error made by different students on an interim or summative assessment. If an incentive to use the data system will be its utility in informing such analysis of error, the system will need to address this. The actionable reports, for example, do not indicate the nature of the analysis that would be produced, beyond the alerts indicating performance at/below/beyond a		

certain level. How the analysis will identify causes, and/or then link to resources or interventions is not described here. The timeline raises an additional question: the data system is to rollout initially in 2010-11, and then more completely in 2011-12. However, the formative assessments will roll out later, only initially in the spring of 2012, and more fully in 2012-13. Use of the system may continue to be limited should teachers and principals not have data closer to the classroom level, with which more regular and timely interventions might be made. The professional development effort sets an ambitious timeline, though with little detail regarding the nature of the work. Evidence regarding how the professional development addresses practitioner needs, which would be critical to successful tool adoption, remains largely absent. The plan expresses, with little detail, its intent to share data from formative and interim assessments, as well as teacher evaluations at the LEA level. Access to summative assessment data is not described.

Total	47	25
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	8

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The State has legal, statutory, or regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification for teachers, including routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education. Evidence is not provided regarding alternative routes for principal preparation. Alternative routes to teacher certification are in use, with nearly 1,000 enrolled in alternative preparation programs this year. Evidence that alternative teacher programs are selective in accepting candidates, provide actual ongoing support (mentoring/coaching) and significantly limit coursework or allow testing out is not clearly provided. Growth of the Intern Certificate is described, without characterization of its selectivity, supervision or ongoing support. That a recent task force recommended that alternative programs going forward should require some sort of mentoring would suggest its absence, an important weakness. Appendix W only lists alternative teacher preparation programs. Information regarding the largest category of programs, "other," is not provided. Elements per program or the numbers certified last year are not provided. Aside from the Wellington Consulting Group study, apparently still in progress, no evidence is provided of a state process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing teaches and principals to fill these areas of shortage.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	27
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	3
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, plans to establish clear approaches to measuring student growth and measure it for each individual student. The state indicates it is implementing value-added/regression based models in charters and developing them for other LEAs, though no documentation regarding the design of these models is provided, nor how those assessments for those areas not covered by AIMS would be developed. Spring 2013 would be the first time that more than one year of summative data for the new assessments would be available; until then, the state would presumably use the meets/exceeds designation from the current exams to stand in for a more robust growth model. The state plans to revise evaluation systems for teachers and principals, and new evaluations will be implemented in 2011-12, in advance of the new interim and summative student assessments. Teacher and principal evaluation systems are under development,

explicitly at LEA levels, with efforts at external quality control indicated. The plan does not appear to provide evidence of an explicit commitment to annual evaluations. External quality control measures include state publication of data comparing student performance and teacher evaluation ratings, along with use of RTTT funds as incentives, and an external study of the new systems for teachers and principals. The plan indicates multiple sources of data to be used in evaluations, including a significant (moving toward 50%) role for student growth data, though no evidence is provided of teacher or principal involvement in the development of these systems. Professional development for teachers and principals at LEA levels is proposed, though the frequency of evaluations is not indicated; this appears to be a local LEA decision. While indicating the intention to use various specialists in professional development efforts around data use, the plan presents little evidence regarding how the state will transition from a hybrid of locally adapted performance based compensation plans, Career Ladder schemes and local systems. The contours of that new system are also not indicated, as considerable leeway will be granted "LEA-by-LEA." When student growth will be considered misaligned to the distribution of performance evaluation ratings is not specified, yet appears to be a key element in balancing local flexibility with quality control and use of student growth data to inform evaluation. While the Distinguished Educator Corps and Rodel Exemplary Teacher Initiative provide significant acknowledgement to a set of teachers identified as effective, the impact on their LEAs of service leaves to underperforming LEAs is unclear. The present tenure definition of "successful teaching" is not provided, though legislation limiting the role of tenure in teacher retention decisions is indicated. The plan includes a detailed timeline for the collection of survey data regarding teacher and principal evaluation practices in LEAs, so as to inform the design of public school report cards. The plan's net impact on LEA use of student performance data in teacher and principal evaluations seems weak or at least uncertain, and little evidence is provided of the state's proposed means for "holding them accountable" for strong design and delivery beyond the pressures reporting might produce or the discretionary use of some RTTT funds. The decision not to deploy a statewide system requires much greater attention to quality control and other means of alignment than the plan presents. The existence, longstanding in the state, of both performance based compensation structures and Career Ladders will require careful alignment to any new system based on student achievement growth. That the state has experience in differentiated roles for teachers and experience in compensation based on performance should provide an important foundation for the proposed plan. However, while the legal and policy means exist for use of the new teacher and principal evaluation data, based on student growth, to inform decisions regarding professional development, compensation, tenure, removal, etc., the degree of local control make it difficult for this state plan assure the outcomes sought in this application.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	9
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	5
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	4

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The state, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, presents a plan for ensuring the equitable distribution of teachers and principals, such that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students. The state also seeks to increase the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching hard-to-staff subjects. In developing its plan, the state does not review/present prior actions or data, nor set specific targets regarding present distribution patterns. The state does present programs that seek to increase the supply of effective teachers and principals for high-poverty/high-minority schools, though how those teachers will be distributed to such schools is unclear; only one program is identified for principals. Without a clearer description of present distribution or a designation of likely causes to any inequitable distribution, evidence of the plan's impact is difficult to ascertain. Current programs offer possible solutions, yet several provide temporary or term solutions to redistributing effective teachers and principals (e.g., "service leaves"). No planned incentives or accountability measures are indicated for ensuring that

participating LEAs ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals across poverty and minority student populations in the state, nor in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	4
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 The state plans to link student achievement and student growth 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. It intends to expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals, though the plan does not, in present form, appear promising. To start, the plan sets no targets nor means of determining targets, and can not at present link teachers and programs to student data, though this is planned to happen in 2011-12. How effective teachers will be gauged then, given that only one year of new assessment data will be available, is not specified here. The plan will rely on incentives produced by public information to affect the distribution of enrollment in programs of varied quality; experience in the field would raise considerable doubt as to the strength of public reporting among the mix of factors driving enrollment patterns. An external review of preparation programs is planned, and the publication of results also is meant to drive enrollment towards higher quality. The state is also working to expand its work with Teach for America, which it deems successful as a provider of teachers in difficult-to-staff schools in the state for several years.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	6
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:
 The state proposes a strategy for professional development, as well as a modest proposal for how it will measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of those supports in order to improve student achievement. The strategy largely involves the creation of a series of new staff roles that LEAs may or may not choose to support their work. The LEAs will determine how they will provide the effective, data-informed professional development. It is unclear how the professional development design/implementation decisions will be made at LEAs, or how stated state expectations (more time for professional development, e.g.) will be encouraged and/or enforced. No evidence is presented regarding the roles of various LEA professionals, such as teachers, in the local planning or implementation. Measurement of effectiveness of LEA programs is suggested, without clear description, and the means of continuous improvement appear weak. The plan indicates that the central RTTT Team will gather "best practices" and disseminate them, a design unlikely to lead to any self-sustained improvement. A possibly more productive strategy would be the proposed statewide mentoring academy, providing all new teachers and principals access to mentors. Further information on the following would strengthen the plan, including how the mentoring academy might function in relation to the other proposed roles, how any statewide coordination would leverage and disseminate local innovations, or how quality control of the new personnel in these roles would be implemented.

Total	138	54
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:
 The state has authority to intervene directly in both schools and LEA's, with a developed process of intervention for underperforming entities. However, the state intervention procedures are based on its definition of "failing" schools which does not yet align to the definition of "persistently lowest-achieving" as per this notice.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	20
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	15
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The application identifies the state's intervention schools for the last several years, a growing number of schools; these schools include many, but not all, of the schools identified under the Race to the Top (RTTT) formula (the state is currently revising its "AZ LEARNS" formula to align with the RTTT formula). The plan identifies an approach and set of interventions, though the means by which the Clearinghouse development would address underperforming and failing schools is not evident. Attention to reading, ECAPs, use of service leaves, specialists, after-school programs, APIP, e-learning, AZRTI and internet access are indicated as tools useful to local LEA's in developing approaches. The plan does not indicate means or models by which these components would be integrated and/or provide a clear view of how ADE would approach intervention, though the section on Native American Dropout Prevention suggests one such more comprehensive strategy. The relation of the approach used in the 50 Native American Communities to the lessons learned is unclear. Data provided in Appendix N suggests a significant bump in AIMS Reading and Math for earlier turnaround efforts, though the impact of AIMS test changes is unclear. Later turnaround efforts appear to have had considerably less impact on passing rates. The selection process or identity of schools for these tables is unclear.</p>		
Total	50	25

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The plan provides evidence that the percentage of state funding going to educational support increased, within a context of sharply declining overall state revenue. Various aspects of the state funding formula provide the means to balance differences in need, taxable property value and other factors, though no quantitative data is provided to verify impact of said formulae.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	34
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state presents charter laws allowing no limit to the total number of charter schools, with over 540 in the state, and 100,000 students attending these schools. The application provides a detailed plan for authorization, monitoring, accountability, reauthorization and closure. Little evidence is provided for denial of charters during the last five years, however, and the number of charters closed was nearly twice the number as those approved in the same period, with no explanation provided. Charter schools receive funding according to the same equalized funding formula of all schools, and per the application, actually received more per student than traditional district schools in FY2009, reflecting weighting. Charters receive other state and federal assistance on commensurate terms, and facilities assistance has also been legislated. LEA's are not restricted from forming other types of innovative autonomous schools.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	2
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state provides some limited evidence that it has created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or</p>		

graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes. The single condition cited concerns the expansion of the Technology Assisted Project Based Instruction system. The state continues to expand this distance learning program in order to offer customized instruction and serve its many remote sites. Prior to this year, the program was limited to seven districts and seven charter schools; legislation has expanded access and moved the program out of pilot status, though quality standards regulating the enterprise are still to be developed. No evidence is provided by which to judge the degree to which the legislation lifting caps will lead to expansion.

Total	55	44
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0

Competitive Reviewer Comments:

While STEM gets mentioned in various points in the plan, indicating several programs that appear to have promise (e.g., NAUTeach), there is little evidence of a systematic emphasis. Little to no evidence is offered regarding a rigorous course of student in STEM, the nature of cooperation with STEM-capable partners, nor significant initiatives to prepare more students for advanced study and careers in STEM, including addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of STEM. The summary text offered introduces several elements for the first time in the application, including the "primary component ... the regional network of mathematics and science education specialists." The relation of this network to other planned state (RTTT related) reform structures or mechanisms is unclear, as is the relation of the coordinating STEM Council to other coordinating entities in the plan. Beyond the support and governing structures, "a variety of initiatives" are indicated, without elaboration of their nature beyond "as strengthening the teacher experience and strengthening the student experience." No evidence of their relation to other proposed components in the application is provided.

Total	15	0
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		No

Absolute Reviewer Comments:

The application does not comprehensively and coherently addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria. Sub-section comments provide further analysis. In an effort to expand and/or highlight prior feedback, it should be noted that further evidence regarding the following would strengthen the plan: 1) The development/collection/analysis of qualitative/quantitative data on professional and community variables to complement the student assessment data described; further evidence warranted to gauge implementation, sustainability, formation of local capacity, shifts in professional norms, etc., including, e.g., gauges of collective efficacy, instructional practice, community engagement, parental support, working conditions, changes in use of daily time, daily professional routines, understanding of plan vision, school climate, etc.; 2) The impact of the total plan on school-level decision-making practices and demands, particularly the impact on school-level leadership practice; the plan has components to which it is committed (many seem well-warranted per evidence presented) and on set timelines; how this plan drives support rollout while also stimulating the demand-side pull from practitioners remains unclear; the plan must balance local flexibility in adapting to local context and support for this balancing warrants further clarification; 3) An opportunity exists in the continued development of

longitudinal student data systems to link to non-school data, providing the greater "360-degree" view of the child, and the promise of more integrated analysis of drivers to educational performance, and thus the promise of more efficient and effective use of funds and interventions across agencies, public and private, supporting this development; 4) Data regarding local community support and civic capacity remains limited, and yet are critical factors in successful reform efforts; 5) Data regarding the drivers of inequitable teacher and principal distribution in the state; 6) Explicit strategies in how the gap between tool development/dissemination and tool use will be bridged, given the frequent experience of this gap in prior reform efforts; 7) With a public commentary period built into the rollout of the new Common Core standards, fallback strategies should be considered, should public comments/engagement demonstrate further work needed to coalesce sufficient support; and 8) Further supporting evidence of sustainability, e.g., how standing state funds would be reallocated to sustain an enhanced continuous improvement cycle, how existing funding sources would support ongoing collaborative support structures and intensive assistance, and how existing funding would support the upkeep of new standards, assessments, enhanced technologies, etc.

Total		0
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Grand Total	500	256
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Arizona Application #120AZ-50



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	38
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	27
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(A) (1)(i) Medium points were awarded to this subsection because the Arizona RTTT proposal did not include goals with clear and credible paths to achieving those goals. Instead of referencing future reforms, it provided a history of past work. It did provide an overall vision statement and three strategies that articulated a comprehensive, coherent reform agenda. The vision statement was "By 2020, Arizona's students will be ranked among the best in the United States, setting an example by achieving excellence amid challenging circumstances. The three strategies were: Focus on Transitions (Moving from a time base system to a content mastery system) Rural Strategy (Several strategies to assist rural schools) STEM Strategy for the 21st Century (Paying special attention to science, technology, engineering and mathematics). (A) (1)(ii) (a) Medium points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona used the model MOU provided by the U.S. Department of Education with minor modifications. One factor that should be noted was that the agreement was between the "Arizona Governor's Office of Economic Recovery" and LEAs and not the Arizona Department of Education. This strategy is questionable because the most important understanding between the state and the LEAs would function through an organization that does not have educational expertise and likely less buy-in from educators. (A) (1)(ii) (b) Low points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona used the model scope of work provided by the U.S. Department of Education with minor modifications. Participating LEAs signed up to be involved in all the activities in the state plan. However narrative in the proposal made clear that local option would be a determining factor in interpreting the MOU. (A) (1)(ii) (c) Medium points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona received MOUs from 376 districts out of a total of 630 LEAs. Of that 630 total, 207 were charter schools. Points were awarded because Signing LEAs represent 87% of all K-12 students and the signing LEAs represent 93% of poverty students. Additional points were also awarded because seventy-four percent of Board Presidents signed the MOU. Additional points were not awarded because only 21% percent of local teacher unions signed the MOU. The lack of significant teacher support is highly troubling because without supportive teachers successful reform is highly unlikely. (A) (1)(iii) (a) High points were awarded to this subsection because signing LEAs represent 87% or all K-12 students and 93% of poverty students. These large number of students are sufficient to make a critical impact in increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematic as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA. The Arizona RTTT proposal sets high targets for student performance improvement from scores of proficiency in the mid to high 20 percent to range now to the 40 percent range by 2019. However, Arizona has a considerable way to go as most of its NAEP scores have low rankings as compared to other states. It ranks 48th in 4th grade reading, 44th in 8th grade reading, 45th in 4th grade math and an improved 38th in 8th grade mathematics. (A) (1)(iii) (b) Medium points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona expects

that most of the increases in achievement rankings will come from decreasing the achievement gaps between Native American, Hispanics and white students. The achievement gaps are quite large. Most of the gaps are in the high twenties and low thirties of numbers of students meeting basic proficiency. Even if the 2019 targets are met, the achievement gaps would still have 20% percent more white students reaching proficiency than minority students. Arizona defends those targets as realistic and do-able. This reviewer believes those targets for decreasing achievement gaps in 2019 are not sufficiently rigorous because the achievement gaps would still remain so large. (A) (1)(iii) (c) Medium points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona, under its RTTT plan, would increasing high school graduation rates from 68% to the low to mid-eighties. Much of the improvement would result from higher graduation levels by Native Americans and Hispanics. If this goal is achieved it would put Arizona in the top tier of states with high graduation rates. However there is not nearly enough detail about the programs that would be used for achieving these lofty goals. (A) (1)(iii)(d). Medium points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona, under its RTTT plan, would increase college enrollment from the present 30% to 45% in 2020. If this goal is met, it would put Arizona above the present 44% median. Arizona is targeting increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit that counted towards earning a degree within two years of enrollment in an institution of higher education from an approximate 75% today to 85% in 2020. This retention rate would be commendable. However, the proposal did not provide sufficient details on how this is going to be accomplished.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	7
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	5
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	2

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(2)(i)(a) Medium points were awarded to this subsection because the leadership team described in the proposal seemed to be primarily a coordinating team for numerous agencies instead of directing the work undertaken in the RTTT proposal. The proposal suggested that the RTTT team's main function would be to work with the P-20 council and other representative groups instead of administering directly the RTTT grant. This lessens the potential for this effort to be successful. The Arizona Department of Education does not seem to have overall leadership responsibilities for the RTTT program but is one of a number of agencies who will coordinate the RTTT program. The proposal did not address what components of the actual implementation of the work each RTTT leadership member would have and what expertise in education they were expected to have. The proposal did not address who would direct the work associated with Standards and Assessment, Data Systems, Great Teachers and Leaders and Supporting Struggling Schools. (A)(2)(i)(b) Low points were awarded to this subsection because the proposal did not describe how the State would support participating LEAs through such activities as identifying promising practices, evaluating those practices' effectiveness, ceasing ineffective practices, widely disseminating and replicating the effective practices statewide, holding participating LEAs accountable for progress and performance, and intervening where necessary. Instead the RTTT proposal indicated that the historical practice of local control would continue to drive efforts to improve education. The plan appears to be that the state would indicate examples of spending priorities such as expenditures on technology, programs and personnel but it would allow LEAs to make their own decisions. There was no tie between a state plan and activities that would support those state priorities. (A)(2)(i)(c) Low points were awarded to this subsection because the Arizona Plan was not clear about program and budget responsibilities. Because LEAs would have most of the decision making authority, they also would have responsibility for accountability. The proposal indicated that the State would largely use existing procedures to provide oversight for the RTTT program and budget. The State would have the same oversight responsibilities that it has for other flow-thru federal programs. The Arizona proposal indicated that the Office of Economic Recovery and the Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting would be responsible for big picture oversight for the RTTT Program. (A)(2)(i)(d) No points were awarded to this subsection because the proposal does not provide evidence on how the State's plans to 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. Instead it states that "The tight coordination between the Governor's Office (including OER and OSPB), ADE and SBE will ensure that the plan is executed." A)(2)(i)(e) No points were awarded to this subsection because the state proposal clearly states that the RTTT personnel and activities "are funded for the life of the RTTT proposal." It makes no promise of 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. A)(2)(ii) (a) Low points were awarded to this subsection because Appendix K showed that less than a third of LEAs teacher's union organizations supported this proposal. No information was provided on the number or percentage of students that were in the LEA indicating Teacher Union support. A)(2)(ii)(b) Low points were awarded to this subsection because there was insufficient documentation of support. Appendix L had two letters of support. They were from a CEO leadership group and an organization called Arizona Education Network.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	14
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(A)(3)(i) High points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona has made progress over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas through a combination of Federal and State funding. Areas where progress was most notable are Arizona's work on reading and with STEM programs. (A)(3)(ii)(a) High points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona's NAEP 4th grade reading scores increased slightly from 22% percent proficiency in 2003 to 24% in 2007 but more because Arizona's NAEP 8th grade mathematics scores increased from 21% proficiency in 2003 to 29% proficiency in 2009. (A)(3)(ii)(b) No points were awarded to this subsection because NAEP data indicated that there had been no improvement in the achievement gap for Native Americans and Hispanics versus white students between 2003 and 2007 and in some cases small increases in achievement gaps. The reading gap in 4th grade reading increased from 25% in 2003 to 27% in 2007 for Native American students and 22% in 2003 to 23% in 2007 for Hispanics. The Arizona test data showed an increase at the high school level for Hispanics moving from 49% proficiency in 2005 to 58% in 2009 with overall proficiency for the State of Arizona on that test at 69% in 2009 from a 64% in 2005. (A)(3)(ii)(c) High points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona's high school graduation rates have stayed in the 75% percent range. This is above the nation-wide average of 70%. Native American graduation rates increased from 51% in 2006 to 60% in 2008. Hispanic graduation rates increased from 60% in 2006 to 67% in 2008. There are several budgets associated with Section A. All are contracts to organizations or private vendors. The narratives do not indicate what products and services those efforts will provide LEAs and schools throughout the state and how that investment will advance the State's RTTT plan. The narratives in the various budgets indicate that money will be used for STEM work, provide Rodel incentives to outstanding teachers, provide National Board Certification Assistance, fund Teach For America recruitment, etc. The budgets did not provide sufficient detail about how some of these expenditures will directly address issues required in the RTTT program.</p>		
Total	125	59

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20

(ii) Adopting standards	20	20
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (B)(i) (a) Maximum points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona is a member of the Common Core Initiative being led by the Council of Chief State Officers and the National Governors Association for best practices. The standards are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation. (B)(i)(b) Maximum points were awarded to this subsection because forty-eight states and three territories are participants in the Common Core Initiative.</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (B)(2) (i) Maximum points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona is participating with two consortiums that are working on developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments: One consortium is under the leadership of CCSSO and the other by the State of Florida. (B)(2) (ii) Maximum points were awarded to this subsection because the CCSSO consortium has thirty-six states under a non-binding MOU with West Virginia and Maine as the Lead states. The second consortium working under non-binding MOU is led by Florida and has thirteen member states.</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	16
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (B)(3) High points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona has a plan for implementation that includes both technical assistance and professional development. The technical assistance would: (1) Assist in Identification, analysis, and use of resources that align to the Common Core Standards; (2) Provide assistance to schools to establish an effective, standards-based instructional system; (3) Improve communication and networking; (4) Use technology to provide assistance to educators and schools. Professional development assistance would be provided by a team of academic/instructional specialists on loan from districts and charters that have the required expertise and ability to deliver high quality professional development. The goals of the professional development are: (1) Increase teacher knowledge of the new Common Standards; (2) Encourage content integration across academic standards; (3) Assure that curriculum, instruction and assessment are aligned; and (4) Use technology to ensure accessibility and equity to professional development. Reviewer was unable to find a budget that would pay for the academic/instructional coaches on loan from districts and charters that were referenced in Section B3.</p>		
Total	70	66

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (C)Medium points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona has a statewide longitudinal data system that has seven of the twelve America Competes Act elements. They are : (1)Unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system; (2) Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information; (3) Student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs; (4) Capacity to communicate with higher education data systems; (5) State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability; (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.</p>		

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (C)(2) Medium points were awarded to this subsection because though Arizona does not have easy access for accessing the data. It does have a high-quality plan to ensure that data from the State's statewide longitudinal data system would be accessible and used to inform and engage, as appropriate, key stakeholders. Presently work is focused on determining needs, functionality and what elements to build or buy.</p>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	11
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (C)(3) (i) High points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona has a plan to increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems. The Arizona design would have a dashboard that would ensure an easy to use and intuitive interface to databases that would inform and improve educators instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness. Some of the components are: student alerts, actionable reports, education career action plans, Arizona growth models, formative assessment and interim assessments. (C)(3) (ii) High points were awarded to this subsection because the proposal had a well thought-out plan on how to use the systems and the resulting data to support continuous instructional improvement. Arizona professional providers make a distinction between training and professional development. They indicated that training would be focused on short-term, how-to-use explorations of the technology and its capacities. Professional development around data was focused on structuring specific instruction-based questions and then using the data to answer those questions. Arizona indicated that they would put great emphasis in helping principals and teachers meet paper work requirements through automation so that they could turn their attention to improving student learning. (C)(3) (iii) No points were awarded to this subsection because Proposal writers seemed to have misunderstood this subsection and instead gave an answer on teacher evaluation being a local-control consideration.</p>		
Total	47	28

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (D)(1)(i) Medium points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona has Board Rules that allow alternative routes from to teacher certification from institutions of higher education and allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education. The alternative pathways are selective in accepting candidates, significantly limit amount of coursework and upon completion of the program award the same level of certification to graduates. The proposal did not indicate that there were similar programs available for principals. (D)(1)(ii) High points were awarded to this subsection because the number of teachers certified in "Alternative Pathways" increased from 177 in 2005-2006 to 983 in 2009-2010. Teach for America is the largest program with 320 individuals in 2009-2010. The proposal did not indicate that there were equivalent programs available for principals. (D)(1)(iii) Additional points could not be awarded for this section because the Arizona proposal did not provide information for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage.</p>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	12
(i) Measuring student growth	5	2
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	4

(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	0
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	6
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(D)(2)(i) Low points were awarded to this subsection because implementation is a local control option. Arizona is having discussions about measuring students through performance bands and is piloting "value-added/regression." Much of the work is in the design stage with considerable attention to what has already been developed elsewhere and what needs to be developed for Arizona's unique needs. As noted in (D)(2)(ii) there would be no state-wide evaluation plans or instruments and instead the evaluation plans, instruments and expectations would be developed locally at each LEA causing redundancy and mixed quality. (D)(2)(ii) Low points were awarded to this subsection because Arizona does not plan to design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals. A task force considered and rejected a statewide evaluation system for teachers and principals. Arizona will expect LEAs to develop evaluation systems that base 50% or more of the evaluation on student performance. The 2010-2011 year will be used to design and develop their new evaluations and to pilot them in a "no-stakes environment." Points were added because ADE will provide principals with professional development on how to make student performance-based observations and because superintendents in participating district will be required to attend professional development on new evaluation systems. (D)(2)(iii) Arizona did not fill out the chart of performance measures necessary to score this subsection and therefore additional points could not be awarded. (D)(2) (iv) Low points were awarded to this section because the Arizona proposal did not provide necessary information. Arizona did not fill out the chart of performance measures necessary to answer the criteria for most of section D. Additional points were not awarded because in the narrative, the proposal stated that: LEAs will make these decisions at a local level. Points were awarded because ADE would provide professional development to help them with this task. Language and commitment about advancing teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance was very weak. The statements in the proposal were: "Teacher and principal effectiveness will be judged on an LEA-by-LEA basis and determined by the LEA's performance evaluation. In instances in which student growth is misaligned with the distribution of performance ratings, LEAs will be required to submit corrective action plans. Failure of that plan will result in RTTT funds being withheld."</p>		
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	4
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	2
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2
<p>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(D)(3) (i) Low points were awarded to this section because Arizona did not provide sufficient detail or performance measures required for this section. In the narrative, it stated that "In the 2011-2012 year, ADE will use data from the new evaluation systems to track the distribution of effective teachers across LEA and intervene when necessary." (D)(3) (ii) Low points were awarded to this section because Arizona did not provide sufficient detail or performance measures required for this section. Instead the proposal stated "in order to ensure the increase in the number and percentage of effective teachers in the higher levels of science and mathematics, RTTT funds have been allocated to TFA to grow in its existing role as a high-quality pipeline of STEM and special education teachers."</p>		
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	4
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(D)(4)(i) Low points were awarded to this section because Arizona had few concrete commitments in its plan. It reported that no teacher or principal preparation programs could link student achievement and student growth. Arizona did made a commitment to fund a study on this topic and at a future date share the information with the public and eventually link teacher and principal preparation programs with student achievement and student growth. Then they would share information with the public so that they could make choices as to what programs offered the best investment. (D)(4)(ii) Low points</p>		

were given for this section because Arizona had few concrete commitments in its plan. Arizona's response was that "by making data easily accessible to the public it can support increased enrollment in its most successful teacher preparation programs....The final step will be to invest and expand those programs that are demonstrated to be most effective."

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	4
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (D)(5) (i) Low points were awarded to this section because Arizona did not provide a detailed plan on how it would provide effective support to teachers and principals. The proposal stated that LEAS were better able to determine where to spend their funds. Some options include academic specialists, assessment specialist, academic coaches, evaluation specialist or school-site liaisons. In any case, because local needs are different, LEAs should make the decisions locally. (ii) Low points were awarded for this section because Arizona did not provide performance measures related to measuring, evaluating, and continuously improving the effectiveness of the supports. Instead it stated that the RTTT Leadership team will be responsible for tracking programs across participating LEAs. They stated that "overtime" recommendations will be developed and shared.</p>		
Total	138	37

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (E)(1) High points were awarded to this section because the Legislature has empowered ADE to intervening in both lowest-achieving schools and LEAs.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	22
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	4
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	18
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (E)(2)(i) High points were awarded to this section because Arizona has a plan and does identify persistently lowest-achieving schools. At the beginning of 2009, it had 43 unique failing schools. Since inception of AZ LEARN the number has been reduced to 23 current failing schools. Of those, 16 schools were identified as persistently low-achieving and requiring interventions. (E)(2)(ii) Medium points were awarded to this section because while Arizona does have a plan for turning around the lowest-achieving schools, it does not indicate which of the four school intervention models, defined in the RTTT notice, it would use or what steps or plans it would use in making that determination. At this time, Arizona does not have any LEAs that need to be taken over. In those 16 schools identified as persistently low-achieving and requiring interventions, ADE is working with the LEAs to turn around the schools but without a designation of the approved intervention model or models. Presently, ADE interventions for turning around persistently low-performing schools use a multi-strategy approach even though they do not fully use any of the RTTT models. ADE plans to deliver its support through instructional coaches. Those coaches provide multiple interventions. Some are: (1) Data driven instructional systems, (2) Rigorous and relevant curriculum, (3) Targeted professional development, (4) Extended learning time, (5) Community/parental education and involvement, (6) Incentives for educators, students and parents, Significant partnerships, and Rigorous tracking of progress. ADE data suggested that approximately two schools are turned around by Arizona each year with a high of nine in one year. The Arizona RTTT proposal provides numerous lessons learned. Some of the lessons learned are: (1) Alternative Schools have poorer results, (2) There are early warning signals that need to be addressed (3) Students need to be shown the relevancy of what they are learning to their</p>		

interests, aspirations, (4) Distinguished, successful practioners, (Primarily retired or on-loan teachers and administrators) who speak from experience, are the most successful in turning around schools.

Total	50	32
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	9
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (F)(1) (i) High points were awarded to this section because Arizona increased its percentage of educational support from 53.5% to 59.5% although budget cuts reduced the actual dollars available to schools. State revenues were down 18% and large cuts were made in the state budget. Education was cut but those cuts were less than other areas of the budget. (F)(1)(ii) High points were awarded to this section because Arizona has an equalization funding formula that provides state money to localities with limited taxable properties. It also provides additional funds to districts on the basis of students with special needs and English language learners. Supplemental funds are provided to districts with less than 600 students and those that are very isolated.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	40
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (F)(2) (i) Maximum points were awarded to this section because Arizona has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools. There are no caps or limits as to the number of charters that can operate in the state or in a particular region or district. Charter schools can be created by three different authorizing agencies. They are school districts, the SBE and the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools. In the 2009-2010 school year, there are over 100,000 students attending charter schools. Currently 43% of charter schools are in rural counties. (F)(2)(ii) Maximum points were awarded to this section because the State has statutes requiring monitoring and general oversight. Some of the requirements include five year interval comprehensive reviews. Additionally charter schools have annual independent audits and annual performance reviews. (F)(2)(iii) Maximum points were awarded to this section because the State's charter schools receive larger amounts of funding compared to traditional public schools. In 2009, charter schools received an average of \$6,396 per student as compared with \$5,435 for public school students. (F)(2)(iv) Maximum points were awarded to this section because some of that differences actually appear to assist charter schools with facilities costs. Laws were changed to allow charter schools to pay minimal property taxes on facilities. (F)(2)(v) Maximum points were awarded to this section because the State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools if they wish to do so.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	2
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (F)(3) Medium points were awarded to this section because Arizona described one program but did not provide reform areas in the four areas of concern in the notice. The Technology Assisted Project Based Instruction Program (TAPBIP) is a distance learning program established in 1998. This program is still in seven school districts and seven charter schools.</p>		
Total	55	51

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The State's application had STEM related activities in its plan. The primary component is a regional network of mathematics and science education specialists. The STEM activities are designed to offer opportunities for students to study mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering in a context of preparing for future careers. The plan has a lot of emphasis on working cooperatively with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers and in offering applied learning opportunities for students. Considerable of the RTTT budget was targeted to STEM support.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		No
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The Arizona RTTT proposal has many weaknesses. In Section A, there were no specific and clear goals for each of the four areas of concern noted in the application. It did NOT comprehensively and coherently address from a "State Plan perspective" two of the four education reform areas. In section B, the State plan basically was to allow decisions to be made locally. The proposal had insufficient State Success Factors information to demonstrate that the State and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform as required in the RTTT notice. Section D had almost none of the required information and there appeared to be little state direction and over-sight for any of the tasks. In many subsections, required charts and summaries of information were not filled out making judgments nearly impossible. This reviewer believes that the Arizona proposal, as it is now written, does not meet the requirements of the Absolute Priority.		
Total		0

Grand Total	500	288
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