



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

California Application #1400CA-1



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	25
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	12
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The State presented a comprehensive reform agenda aimed at increasing achievement through improved instructional models designed to address the diverse learning needs of its students. To accomplish its goals, the State is calling for a new local-state relationship focusing on achieving mutual goals. The State has made critical linkages between teacher quality and student achievement and recognized the need to make major investments in data systems to measure teacher effectiveness and student growth. The plan supports both the educator workforce and the children and youth enrolled in the State's elementary and secondary schools. California's plan strengthens academic standards, provides professional development in crafting curriculum frameworks and helping teachers teach to the new standards, and aligns assessments with the new content standards. California has secured participation from 804 districts representing almost one-half of all districts and 56 percent of schools. While this does not represent universal participation, California's size was taken into account in awarding points. Implementing a reform effort of this magnitude would be challenging for any State. As the application points out, California has districts with larger enrollments than some states. By focusing on about one-half of its districts, the State has a reasonable chance to implement reforms more deeply and authentically in these selected districts rather than spread resources too thinly across the State. If all of the participating districts honor their commitment, the Race to the Top reforms could reach 58 percent of all students and 61 percent of all students living in poverty which could make a significant impact on raising achievement for the State's students most in need. Approximately 54 percent of students in the participating districts are low income, compared to 52 percent of districts statewide. California's application is further strengthened by not allowing districts to opt out of any of the Race to the Top provisions outlined in the required Memos of Understanding (MOU). The State has also encouraged interdistrict partnerships in implementing key elements of Race to the Top which were articulated in the MOUs. Collaboration among districts will help leverage funds and resources to build capacity to implement the Race to the Top reforms. However, within the 56 percent of LEAs that have agreed to participate in Race to the Top, only 26 percent of district union leaders signed the MOUs supporting the initiative. Of the ten largest districts, six did not provide signatures of union leaders including Los Angeles Unified, the nation's second largest school district. Most districts in California require some form of collective bargaining on issues related to teacher hiring, compensation, and/or assignment. Furthermore, California sets the tone early on in its application that it is the districts that will be the driving force in implementing the Race to the Top reforms with the State setting accountability standards and supporting LEA efforts. Unions are critical stakeholders in many of California's school districts. The application did not discuss the reasons for the low level of union engagement. It is not clear if unions are opposed to the Race to the Top initiative or if the State did not appropriately engage unions in the discussions surrounding district participation. The lack of union buy

-in at this stage raises serious concerns about the ability of the State to implement the Race to the Top reforms, especially the critical human capital provisions. Significant points for sections (A)(1)(ii) and (iii) were deducted for the State's lack of union buy-in.

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

30 17

(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement

20 10

(ii) Using broad stakeholder support

10 7

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

California has made a commitment to using this infusion of Federal funds to make short-term investment to build its educational infrastructure to support long-term reforms. As an indicator of this commitment, the State is proposing to retain only 2% of its requested \$500 million for the state portion for salaries and fringe benefits at the SEA. In ensuring capacity to implement its proposed plan, California identifies three current entities that will support reform: the CDE, 11 regional consortia of regional offices, and the California Comprehensive Center. The application suggests that these three entities will be responsible for supporting districts in implementing the Race to the Top Reforms. The State plans to make significant financial investments—about 1/3 of the state portion-- in the 11 regional offices to support LEA efforts. It is not clear how this structure is significantly different from the current structure or how this expanded layer of bureaucracy will more effectively or efficiently deliver services to LEAs—and the classroom. The State indicates that it will shift greater funds to the regional offices in return for greater accountability. However, the application does not go in to enough detail to evaluate the degree of accountability or oversight the SEA will have over the regional centers. Further, it is unclear how the State intends to sustain the level of funding to the regional centers after the Race to the Top grant ends. The State will add a fourth partner—the Regional Charter Innovation Center to support the development of high-quality charter school programs. The application does not describe how this organization will work in concert with the other entities to ensure high standards of program quality and accountability cut across all instructional providers. A major weakness of the application is that the State did not provide a clear management plan or organizational structure to oversee the activities and expenditures of funds. The applicant did not describe its management team or job descriptions and/or roles and responsibilities of key staff. It was not evident how the grant would be fiscally managed or audited. A management plan with clear lines of authority is critical given the potential magnitude of this award and the large amount of funds the State is proposing to be suballocated. The application described several innovations to support teaching and learning that make it poised to provide significant support to statewide and regional professional learning communities. Brokers of Expertise holds promise to deliver research-based strategies developed by teachers for teachers. The State appears to be committed to evaluating its Race to the Top efforts through a legislatively-mandated evaluation. The application describes increased attention to data driven decision making; however, it is not clear how the performance measures developed by LEAs, regional offices, and the CDE will be coordinated or linked. The application clearly demonstrates that the State has the support of the higher education community, parents, foundations, business organizations, and researchers. However, it again is disconcerting that teacher organizations are not committed stakeholders for the Race to the Top effort.

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

30 20

(i) Making progress in each reform area

5 4

(ii) Improving student outcomes

25 16

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

California's application is somewhat uneven in addressing the State's past achievements in the four Race to the Top reform areas. The State demonstrated that it has a long history in setting academic standards and aligning assessments to those standards. It also was an early adopter of professional

standards for teachers and leaders and has been a leader in providing support for new teachers. California appears to be lagging in developing the necessary IT infrastructure to support the Race to the Top reforms. The State does not have a system in place with the required teacher/students links; the governor signed legislation to remove these barriers only in January 2010. The State indicated that its support to struggling schools has been met with mixed success. The application did not address how ARRA funds have supported the Race to the Top reforms or how other Federal and State dollars have been leveraged in the four key areas. California's success in improving student outcomes has been mixed. The State's application clearly shows that California's students as a whole are making gains across subject and grades on the state assessments. However, gains in NAEP reading and mathematics have stalled and there continue to be significant achievement gaps between racial groups across assessments. There is a disconnect between the outcomes reported on the state and NAEP assessments, although the application states the NCES found the state's proficiency standards to be rigorous compared to NAEP. The State is facing continuing declines in high school graduation rates. While there is a generic statement linking systemic reforms to improved student achievement, the application does not clearly link specific reforms or instructional strategies to student outcomes.

Total	125	62
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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: California provided evidence that it is participating in CCSSO-NGA's Common Core Standards Consortium to develop common standards in mathematics and English-language arts that are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness. Fifty-one states and territories—a clear majority of states—are participating in the initiative. Evidence was submitted that the State is actively moving forward in adopting these standards. California passed legislation indicating its intent to adopt the common core standards by August 2, 2010. The State has established an Academic Content Standards Committee to oversee this process. The legislation further specifies that at least 85 percent of the State's standards be composed of the common core standards; the State was unable to commit to this requirement in the original MOU.</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: California appears to be committed to moving forward in developing high-quality assessments. The State recently passed legislation to allow assessments that measure student growth. The State has signed non-binding MOUs with three multi-state assessment consortia. Two of the three consortia include over one-half of the states. All of the consortia are focused on assessments designed to measure the Common Core Standards.</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	14
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: California provided an ambitious schedule for transitioning to the new standards and appears to be on track in meeting these milestones. California has a process in place to review curriculum frameworks and adopt instructional materials in grades K-8; the State will use these processes to integrate the new standards. The State is in the process of soliciting names for members of the committee to examine the mathematics curriculum framework. The State is lagging behind in developing processes for</p>		

adopting instructional materials for grades 9-12. The State plans to use the planned professional learning communities and Brokers of Expertise portal as avenues for providing professional development to educators around the new standards. Having proven processes in place to review curriculum standards and adopt instructional materials coupled with early plans for professional development suggests that California will be able to meet its targets for transitioning to the new Common Core Standards. While the State is on track on transitioning to new standards, it may have a greater challenge in adopting new assessments. The plans and timeline for transitioning to the new assessments are not as detailed as those for implementing new standards. It is not clear how the State intends to support districts in developing local formative assessments. The CDE is under a legislative mandate to explore ways to focus on science and mathematics and measure postsecondary and career readiness in the calculations of the State's Academic Performance Index, but it is not clear where the State is in the process.

Total	70	64
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	6
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: California reported that it currently has 3 of the 12 of the America COMPETES Act elements in place in its longitudinal data system.		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	2
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: The State only recently passed a law to coordinate the use of student data for research purposes. The State does not discuss the process or timeline for accomplishing this task and it is unknown at this time what authority the State ultimately will have in releasing student data or which organization will serve as an IRB. Continuing the development of the longitudinal data system appears to be dependent on the State securing an IES grant. The application states that if the State does not receive this grant, Race to the Top funds will be used to build the system; the application does not indicate how funds would be shifted from other Race to the Top areas to support the development of the longitudinal data system. Given that California is in the beginning stages of developing its longitudinal data system, there is major concern about the State's ability to have the system in place to meet its reform goals within the grant period. The plan for a "one-stop shop" for accessing the State's wealth of education data will provide accessible information to a broad-range of stakeholders. However, it is not clear how the State will ensure full reporting by LEAs. The application indicates that LEAs will want to submit data once they see others submitting. This might not be the best approach or incentive to ensure that accurate, complete, and timely data are submitted through the portal.		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	6
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: Given that formative assessments are conducted at the LEA level and school districts across the State select their own assessments, the State is requiring (through the MOU) LEAs to develop formative assessments aligned with state standards and to develop local instructional improvement systems. The application does not detail how many districts currently are lacking these systems or the burden on LEAs or the level of technical assistance required to put these systems in place by the 2011-12 school year, so it is not clear whether this is a reasonable target. Furthermore, the State is targeting only 33 percent of teachers to use data in their practice to change instruction by school year 2011-12 and 66 percent by the end of school year 2013-14. These targets seem low given the importance of data in shaping teachers' practice and improving student learning at the classroom level. Again, there is concern about the State's ability to have its data systems in place to meet its reform goals within the		

grant period. It is critical that the State have the means to calculate a growth measure to provide the robust data teachers need to monitor student progress and adapt professional practice.

Total	47	14
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	16

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

California provided sufficient documentation that it has created alternative pathways for aspiring teachers and principals that meet all five elements listed in the Race to the Top definition of an alternative route. The application further documented that the alternative routes for teachers are actively in use and have grown over 400 percent since the 1995-96 school year. The routes for principals, however, appear to be less well-established. While the State has alternative routes for principals in statute, the majority of principals (75 percent of Level I administrative certificates and all of Level II) complete their preparation through traditional routes. California enjoys the support of the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning which conducts an independent review of the teaching working force; the Center publishes annual statistics on teacher shortages in the State's hardest to staff schools. The State provided additional evidence that the CDE and CTC are monitoring shortage areas on an annual basis. The results are impressive; the State has reduced the number of underprepared teachers from 20 percent of the workforce to 3 percent over the last decade. The data on principals, however, is less compelling. The application notes that the State has not systematically monitored, evaluated, or identified shortage areas for principals. The application indicated that there are several new programs offered by the UC system to prepare principals in high-need schools. It is unclear what data were available to support the creation of these programs to ensure they were serving the areas with the greatest needs.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	32
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	9
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	9

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

California is in the early stages of developing an approach to measure student growth and measure it for each student. The application provided a timeline for developing the model. It is not clear which entity (the CDE, the state assessment contractor, or an independent contractor) was going to be responsible for developing the model. The schedule is fairly ambitious given that the State legislature only recently authorized the use of a student growth model. In terms of designing and implementing rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals, the State is proposing to develop voluntary state models that LEAs could choose to adopt. LEAs could also elect to develop their own system. It is not clear how strong the State role will be in determining the rigor of the LEA evaluation systems or what oversight it will have in ensuring the evaluations are conducted as planned. Districts may require these systems to be included in collective bargaining agreements; the fact that both the State and LEA systems require educator input may help achieve buy-in. The State intends to secure the services of a contractor to ensure that the evaluation instruments developed by the State are valid and reliable; it is not clear how validity and reliability will be assured for the LEA-developed instruments. The State is committed to providing training to LEAs on how to conduct classroom observations which is critical to ensuring they are conducted in an objective and fair manner. Student growth must factor into educator evaluation but the plan does not address how

teachers in non-tested grades or subjects will be evaluated. The draft guidelines issued by the State encompass those elements contained in the Race to the Top guidelines including annual evaluation, multiple rating categories including student growth, and mechanisms to provide constructive feedback. The State provided targets on the uses the evaluations to inform the key Race to the Top activities. The State does not currently collect data on most of these activities including developing, compensating, promoting, granting tenure to, and removing educators. Exhibit 15 provides a footnote that indicates that all of these activities are subject to collective bargaining agreements. Given that the application did not have the support of the majority of union leaders (See Section A) and that the State is in the beginning stages of developing its growth model, the targets may be unreasonable to achieve even by school year 2014-15. The application does not provide strategies on how the State might secure educator buy-in to accomplish these activities, or if LEAs have had success in the past in negotiating these activities in collective bargaining agreements.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	15
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	9
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:

A major concern with the State's plan for equitable distribution of teachers and principals is the lack of data to determine where the State is in the process of ensuring the equitable distribution of effective educators. The State does not have a definition—or the data systems—in place to measure educator effectiveness. Furthermore, the majority of LEAs will not have their evaluation systems in place until 2012-13. The applicant did not provide baseline data or set targets in meeting the equity provisions of Race to the Top. On the positive side, the State has an infrastructure in place to provide technical assistance and monitoring to ensure the equitable distribution of educators through the QEIA and CMIS (recently renamed DELTA) systems. The State has already required that over one-half of LEAs have plans in place to address the equitable distribution of teachers and principals. The State is currently working on the data system for LEAs to report out-of-field assignments by school, subject, and specialty area to the public. Once the indicators have been developed to measure the distribution of effective educators, the State should be able to provide support to and hold LEAs accountability for ensuring the equitable distribution of educators in high poverty/high minority schools in a timely manner. LEAs have several tools at their disposal to address equity. Principals in low-performing schools for example, are no longer required to accept teachers based solely on seniority. The State also has a loan forgiveness program, incentives for NBPTS certified teachers, and mentoring programs designed specifically to recruit and retain teachers to teach in high-needs schools. For the most part, these programs appear to be targeted to teachers, not principals.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	10
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The higher education community appears to be committed to implementing the Race to the Top provisions related to improving the effectiveness of educator preparation programs. The State is in the process of linking the growth in student achievement back to the program where he or she was prepared and recommended for a credential. California is ahead of the curve in measuring the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs linked to student growth in large part because of a government-funded pilot currently under way at California State University (CSU). The State has buy-in from the higher education community to expand the pilot to all teacher preparation programs. CSU has already collected preliminary data and the State has plans to scale-up and to implement the accountability system by School Year 2012. Furthermore IHEs have signed MOUs agreeing to “expand, modify, or close programs based on student achievement and student growth data” suggesting there is authentic buy-in from the higher education community not only on reporting measures of quality, but in taking action to improve or close failing programs. The State appears to be on track with this ambitious plan. The State also has plans to measure the effectiveness of programs that prepare administrators, but these will lag behind efforts for teachers.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	13
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: California documented its long-term commitment to providing quality professional development to novice teachers. The BTSA program, in particular, has provided data driven induction support to new teachers across the State. Less clear is California's commitment to providing on-going, job embedded professional development throughout a teacher's career. The application cites a report calling on reforms in professional development that appear not to have been implemented. The application further states that it will use the Race to the Top initiative to target existing federal and state funds to implement job-embedded professional development tied to performance evaluations. It is not clear what role the professional learning communities will play in retooling the State's professional development system. The application states that California has not invested the same level of support for new principals as it has for new teachers. The State is committing over \$20 million in Race to the Top funds for LEAs to establish principal induction programs. It is also dedicating a smaller portion of funds to support a cadre of turnaround leaders to support the activities described in Section E. The State is estimating that it will train 90 principals through this route during the grant period. However, this target seems low given that the State estimates that over 780 schools will be identified for turnaround intervention over the next four years. As with other sections of the application, California may encounter challenges developing a data-driven professional development system because it currently lacks the IT infrastructure to develop measures of effectiveness. Given the lack of baseline data, for these performance measures, it is not possible to get a sense of the challenge the State faces in meeting the (D)(5) requirements.</p>		
Total	138	86

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: The application states that the State has the authority to intervene in struggling schools and LEAs. Copies of the authorizing legislation were provided in the appendix.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	32
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	27
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The application detailed the process for identifying the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools requiring intervention. The process identified 187 schools that must implement one of the four intervention models in the first year of the Race to the Top grant. It is not clear if the State can levy appropriate sanctions against LEAs for schools that continue to struggle. The application states that a persistently low-achieving school that does not demonstrate progress within 3 years of implementing the intervention model (after a planning year) must implement one of the remaining models. The State does not indicate if the school has another 3 years to demonstrate progress or if the school must take more rapid action to improve student achievement. Points were deducted for this lack of clarity. The State articulated a plan to offer support to LEAs in assisting turnaround schools that includes educating LEAs about the components of the models and establishing guidelines to assist LEAs in selecting turn around partners. As mentioned in Section D, the State will support the Turnaround Principal Institute to prepare a cadre of leaders to effectively turn around low-performing schools.</p>		
Total	50	42

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	6
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: California increased the percentage of revenues allocated to public education from 46 percent in FY08 to 47.4 percent in FY09. While this is not a large increase in the percentage of revenues devoted to public education (and total expenditures have decreased) the State's commitment to education is commendable considering the severe economic conditions the State is facing. California faces significant challenges in funding public education given that Proposition 13 significantly eroded property tax revenues that are available to fund public education. The State has attempted to equalize education funding through the General Fund, although the formula seems to favor funding adequacy rather than equity. The current formula is heavily weighted on district growth, type and size and not poverty. Points were deducted because of the formula's focus on adequate funding. However, Economic Impact Aid and other categorical programs provide significant funding to attempt to equalize funding between high and low poverty LEAs. In light of the current economic conditions, LEAs have been granted greater flexibility in how these funds are spent which could put equity funding in further jeopardy. The applicant did not describe how LEAs ensure equity between high and low poverty schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	31
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: Since 1998 California has capped its number of charter schools not to exceed 100 newly authorized charters per year. Unused charters may be rolled over into the next year. While there is a cap, it is a "high cap". In Section A, the State reported that there were 10,225 schools operating statewide. In school year 2009-10 the State authorized 1,350 charter schools, which is 13 percent of all schools. The State provided clear evidence that it has processes in place for LEAs to monitor the effectiveness of charter schools and close them if necessary. Once approved, charters do not operate indefinitely; they must be renewed after their first 5 years of operation. The applicant provided data showing that LEAs have revoked 139 charters since the 2005-06 school year. The State did not thoroughly address how charters are encouraged to serve high-need students. However, the State has plans to have its new partner—the Regional Charter School Innovation Center—work with LEAs to increase support for the creation of charters to serve high-need populations. State laws require funding mechanisms that ensure charters receive equitable funding compared with traditional schools and the State has made significant investments in securing and improving facilities for charter school operations. As evidence, the applicant noted that recent bond measures have authorized \$850 million for charter school construction projects. It is clear from the legislation provided in the appendix and the discussion on the bonds approved by California voters that there is considerable public support for charter schools in the State. The applicant did not provide evidence that it enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (such as open enrollment programs) other than charter schools.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The application provided compelling evidence that it is committed to additional systemic reforms related to empowering parents, creating a culture of innovation and flexibility to support reforms at the district level, and improving and expanding early childhood education. The State did not address how these reforms will improve student outcomes.</p>		
Total	55	41

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
Competitive Reviewer Comments: Throughout the application the State demonstrated its need to educate more students in STEM areas, strengthen STEM standards and curriculum, and increase the number of effective teachers in these areas. The State provided evidence of a strong PK-20 partnership to improve STEM instruction. The State also has documented partnerships with the technology industry designed to support the State's long-term reform efforts in STEM education, as well as the initiatives detailed in its Race to the Top application. However, the State's approach to STEM does not meet the standard of a high-quality plan. There are no detailed action plans or timeframes to meet the STEM goals and the STEM activities do not appear to be coordinated across the agency. Also lacking is a cohesive discussion on how the State plans to offer a rigorous course of study across the STEM-related subject areas.		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

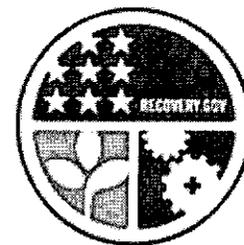
	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: California has done a commendable job articulating its commitment to undertaking the reforms in the four Race to the Top areas. The State has made critical linkages between teacher quality and student achievement and recognized the need to make major investments in data systems to measure teacher effectiveness and student growth. The plan supports both the educator workforce and the children and youth enrolled in the State's elementary and secondary schools. California's plan strengthens academic standards, provides professional development in crafting curriculum frameworks and helping teachers teach to the new standards, and aligns assessments with the new content standards. The State intends to coordinate Race to the Top funds with existing state and local dollars to expand systems of supports to LEAs through the 11 regional offices to fully implement the Race to the Top Reforms. The State also is leveraging state and federal funds to refocus an array of professional development efforts to support this initiative.		
Total		0

Grand Total	500	309
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1



California Application #1400CA-2

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	45
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: California's application clearly sets forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda which addresses all four of the key reform areas. While explicit goals for each of the key reform areas are not provided, a wide range of strategies and goals are articulated which do address all four areas. California created an MOU which closely follows the example provided in the application but which includes the addition of an opt-out provision for districts and schools when MOU elements would be in conflict with local bargaining agreements. The opt-out provision and its potential impact on meaningful school district participation is not discussed in the application narrative. California required all districts to agree to implement all MOU elements in order to be a RTTT participating district and committed to providing funds to all districts in the state. Approximately 56% of districts in the state agreed to be participating districts. This is a substantial level of participation but is undercut by the MOU opt-out provision which is likely to limit the engagement of districts on some of the sensitive RTTT elements such as the teacher evaluation and compensation provisions. Points were withheld in A(1)(iii) because it would have been possible to have an even higher percentage of LEAs participating.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	23
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	15
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: California has described a comprehensive and coherent approach for supporting its RTTT implementation using a network which includes the California Department of Education, the California Comprehensive Center, the Regional Charter Innovation Center, 11 regional offices, and all county offices of education. RTTT funds will be blended with Title I, Title II, and state funds to support the plan. Approximately 96% of the grant funds will ultimately go to LEAs where the bulk of the reform work will be done. The pass-through of funds to the district level is so aggressive that there is some question about whether sufficient funds will be retained to provide strategic state-level support for the initiatives. According to the budget information in the appendix, California plans to provide \$16,100,000 annually to LEAs to provide "High Quality Alternative Pathways to Teaching in Shortage Areas." LEAs would be required to provide matching funds. Given the California financial crisis, it is doubtful they have the capacity to do so. California described extensive outreach efforts aimed at getting input on the development of their plan and holding research and practice forums examining key aspects of the RTTT program. They also provided MOUs for state higher education institutions and letters of support</p>		

from a broad range of stakeholders though no letter of support or MOU was provided for the state teachers or administrators association, a conspicuous omission.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	20
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	15
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: California did provide substantial detail on its efforts in the four key reform areas, some of which go as far as 10 years back. California provided evidence of making modest progress for all subgroups on the reading and mathematics assessments for the California Standards Tests and the NAEP assessments. For 2009, just 50% of California tested students showed proficiency on the state English Language Arts assessments while only 46% showed proficiency in mathematics. California provided evidence that it has made very slight progress in closing subgroup achievement gaps. The application included very little information on the actions that may have contributed to these outcomes.</p>		
Total	125	88

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: California provided documentation that it is part of the National Governors Association Consortium for the Development of Common Core Standards. The consortium includes 48 states, the District of Columbia, and two territories. The consortium will produce a set of curriculum standards for English language arts and mathematics for grades K-12 as well as college and career readiness standards. California provided a detailed plan to consider adoption of the Common Core Standards by August 2, 2010.</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	8
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: California submitted MOUs regarding non-binding participation in three consortia ranging in size from 23 to 36 states. The application also included a statement documenting the intent to apply separately for Race to the Top assessment program funds.</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	18
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: California provided a high-quality plan for supporting statewide transition to the implementation of the new standards and assessments and included key activities, a timeline, and parties responsible. There was a more coherent plan for the K-8 range than for high schools.</p>		
Total	70	66

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	6
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: California currently has just three of the twelve America Competes Act elements for state data systems in place, including the yearly test records of individual students, information on students not tested by grade and subject, and a teacher identifier system that can match teachers to students.</p>		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: California, in the appendices, provided a high-quality plan for accessing and using state data which included activities, a responsible party, timeline elements, and performance measures. The application described a utilization focused approach to planning which will promote buy-in.</p>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	12
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: California, in the appendices, provided a high-quality plan for using state data to improve instruction which included activities, a responsible party, timeline elements, and performance measures. California adequately addressed how it will support districts in selecting instructional improvement systems. Six points total were withheld because California's decentralized approach to selection of instructional improvement systems is likely to result in compatibility and variability issues that create serious problems for the provision of support in using the systems and in making data available to researchers.</p>		
Total	47	23

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	19
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: California submitted evidence that it provides multiple pathways for teacher and principal credentialing. Most of these pathways include all required elements but a few do not. California has one of the most extensive systems in the nation for providing alternate pathways to credentialing and does provide an option independent of higher education. In addition to higher education, certification processes can also be provided by community-based organizations and nongovernmental organizations. California submitted evidence that it has a track record of monitoring and addressing areas of teacher shortage and described a partnership with the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning to continue this activity and extend it to include principals. Two points were withheld because of limited attention to the alternate pathways for principals.</p>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	56
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	26

<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: California submitted a high quality plan including activities, responsible parties, and timeline for achieving the required grant elements for teacher and principal evaluation. California described plans by which it will transition from the current student achievement status model to a growth model. California law provides for use of student achievement data in teacher and principal evaluations. California's teacher evaluation system is much more fully developed and documented then it's principal evaluation system but California described plans for assuring that both evaluation types meet RTTT requirements. The related performance targets are ambitious but achievable.</p>		
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	15
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	8
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7
<p>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: California provided evidence that it has been working to improve equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals for several years and has several programs and processes to support that goal. California provided a limited plan which has the minimal characteristics of a high-quality plan in that it addresses activities, responsible parties, and provides a timeline. California reported that it currently does not have baseline data for the performance measures and declined to establish annual targets for both subareas. California did provide definitions of high poverty and high minority schools.</p>		
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	14
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: California provided the MOU used for its institutions of higher education showing a strong commitment to the use of student assessment information for the evaluation of training programs and set a target for full implementation by the end of the 2012-2013 school year. California has already implemented a pilot study for such a system.</p>		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	15
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: California provided information on its beginning teacher supporting assessment program which has been in place since 2005. California provided a plan with high-quality elements for building on this initial teacher support system and expanding it to include support for schools and teachers linking professional development to teacher evaluation status and identified needs. Professional development efforts will also focus on training turnaround specialists for placement in turnaround schools. The plans are ambitious, appropriate, and thoughtfully integrated but do not include any information on the amount or source of funds that will be invested in these efforts.</p>		
Total	138	119

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: California provided documentation showing that it has been given authority by the legislature to intervene with both districts and schools requiring them to implement one of the four interventions for turning around the lowest achieving schools and in fact parents can petition to request such action.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	30

(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The California application provided details on the procedure for identifying persistently low achieving schools and reported the results of applying the criteria. California provided a comprehensive high-quality plan for supporting districts in turning around persistently low achieving schools. The plan describes the processes and several funding mechanisms to be used but did not provide information on the amount of funds to be allocated. California did only partial reporting on the performance measures and did not report results and lessons learned since the 2004-2005 school year.		
Total	50	40

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	9
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: California provided evidence that it was able to slightly increase the percentage of state funds dedicated to education from 2007-2008 to 2008-2009. The actual dollar level of funding for education was down slightly. California also provided evidence that it has a system assuring equitable funding across LEAs in the state including equitable funding for high-poverty and other schools.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	28
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: California provided evidence that its charter school law, while restricting the percentage of charter schools that can be added in a given year, does not place any limit on the total number or percentage of the schools in the state that can become charter schools. For this current school year, California has 810 charter schools which is 8% of schools in the state. For each school year, 100 schools, or approximately 1% of the total schools in California, can become charter schools. The statute provides for revocation of charter school authorization for low performing charter schools. Data were presented showing that roughly one third of the charter schools in California closed each year from 2005-2006 to 2009-2010. No breakout of the reasons for the closure was provided and that data are reportedly not collected. California provided evidence that its funding processes and sources for charter schools are comparable to those made available for regular schools. The financial analysis indicated that California charter schools are funded at approximately 95% of the level of regular schools. California provided evidence that it does provide funding for charter school facilities and in fact has a charter school set aside in its state school building program. California, in its application, did not address F(2)(v) element regarding the operation of innovative or autonomous public schools.		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	3
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: California provided information on other significant reform conditions present in the state but did not address the extent to which they have increased student achievement, impacted graduation rates, or narrowed achievement gaps.		
Total	55	40

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
Competitive Reviewer Comments: California provided evidence of wide ranging activities and processes to support science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The application narrative included past STEM activities and planned emphases aligned with RTTT. The TechNet partnership and the Higher Education Science and Mathematics Initiates are just two examples of the good things California is doing with STEM. The information submitted did not show a plan for addressing STEM that is sufficiently systematic, comprehensive, and coherent to be considered of high quality.		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

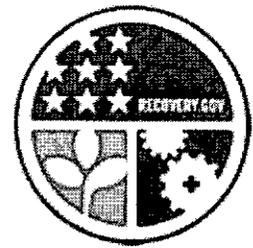
	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: California's application presented a comprehensive approach to supporting the four key education reform areas integrating a wide range of processes and resources to support reform efforts of local school districts. California's successes with improvement efforts and the level of participation of LEAs should provide a basis for a successful RTTT implementation.		
Total		0
Grand Total	500	376



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

California Application #1400CA-3



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	44
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state's plan clearly articulates a reform agenda, set of goals, and implementation plan that is internally consistent and meets the criteria for reform in the notice. The participating LEAs, which number over 800, represent 58% of the state's students and 61% of the students in poverty, indicating a significant level of commitment. Support from 78% of the local school boards is also good. The state boldly chose not to allow participating LEAs to opt out of the specific strategies. The proposal does, however, raise a number of concerns. The concept of "a new local-state relationship" may result in inefficient implementation of the program and may represent an attempt by the state to garner support for the application -- especially given the amount and percentage of grant funds being allocated to the LEAs in the proposal -- without garnering commitment to its components. Only 26% of the local teachers union leaders signed on, and many of the large district union leaders did not. Overall, it is likely the implemented reforms will have a broad statewide impact, despite these particular concerns.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	20
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	15
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state's emphasis on a regional system of support is sensible given the state's size, geography, and diversity. Further, the incorporation of the CA Comprehensive Center and Regional Charter Innovation Center, and the establishment of Professional Learning Communities, improve the state's capacity to implement its reforms successfully. The state has an appropriate grant oversight budget and a reasonable plan for on-going evaluation and funding what works, as well as leveraging existing funding streams by planning to use the RTTT funding for infrastructure-type initiatives. The distributed nature of the implementation plan, however, creates a risk of unclear accountability for the overall success of the reform agenda as well as for the specific initiatives. The state does demonstrate very strong and broad stakeholder support (with the notable exception of statewide education associations), in many cases at an advanced stage of planning.</p>		
(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	23
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5

(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	18
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state has made substantial progress initiating reforms in the past few years that are consistent with the RTTT reform agenda. The state has demonstrated some ability to improve student outcomes and reduce the achievement gap on both the rigorous California Standards Tests and on the NAEP (the achievement gap shows a slight, but not substantial, reduction). The state has not, however, succeeded in improving its high school graduation rate.		
Total	125	87

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
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state is participating in a consortium that is working toward timely development and adoption of common standards, and which includes a significant number of states. The state is appropriately authorized by recent legislation to adopt those standards.		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state is participating in several consortia (including SMARTER and Achieve) that are developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments, and which include a significant number of states.		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	18
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state has already demonstrated its ability to transition to enhanced standards and it articulates a solid understanding of the issues surrounding high-quality aligned assessments. The state places particular emphasis on curriculum and instructional materials, but its proposed reliance on LEAs to drive development of formative assessments may be less efficient and effective.		
Total	70	68

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	6
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: Credit given for elements 6-8.		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

The state proposes a plan that builds on its track record of collecting data, making it publicly available, and offering guidance around its use. The state proposes to solicit stakeholder input into the expanded data collection plan, and continue to provide good accessibility. The January 2010 legislation authorizing the CDE to coordinate data for research purposes underscores the state's commitment to this criterion. The plan, however, does not address the "how" of implementation, e.g., technology issues, at all.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	9
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state's plan is reasonable and appropriately addresses each individual criterion. Its concept of a Consumer Reports-like guide to local instructional improvement systems is novel but passive. The concept of an institutional review board to screen research requests may be overly restrictive and burdensome. The plan does not address how the data will enable research with respect to subgroup, remedial and gifted students. The target for 100% implementation of instructional improvement systems by 2011-21 is ambitious but may not be achievable; the target of 66% of teachers using data in their practice to change instruction is achievable but may not be ambitious (unless it is restricted to tested subjects).		
Total	47	19

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	18
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state provides a multitude of alternative certification pathways for teachers and principals that are being used, as evidenced in the appendix. With respect to criterion (iii), the state has a good process for teachers but must rely on some third party non-profit organizations for non-systemic analysis of the principal market. Nevertheless, the state has sponsored a program to train principals to serve in high needs schools. Overall, the state's approach to alternative certification and addressing areas of shortage is strong and its \$64 million project budget focused on this criterion is highly supportive of its plan.		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	37
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	15
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state's plan addressess all of the requirements of the criteria adequately. The state's approach to developing evaluation systems is robust, with flexibility of LEAs to customize and collaborate subject to the stated requirements. But there is significant risk the Evaluation Advisory Group (with no clear governance) will be too unwieldy or politicized and fail to produce the required timely output. The plan also risks having recommendations that get watered down or never implemented. The plan insufficiently addresses part of criterion (iv) regarding the use of the evaluations for compensation, promotion, tenure, and removal; this lack of specificity is inconsistent with its aggressive targets to go from 10% to 85% of LEAs that use the new evaluation systems for these decisions.		
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	23

(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	14
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	9
(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state demonstrates a clear understanding of the requirement, has demonstrated a legislative track record (including the QEIA and the right of principals to refuse teacher transfers based on seniority) in support of addressing inequity, and presents a plan and structure that are likely to support successful implementation. The state's explanation for not including targets is reasonable.		
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	14
(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: The state is committed to use its systems to improve the effectiveness of these programs and to make public the related data. The state demonstrates strong buy-in from CSU -- including the expansion of a pilot program that is highly consistent with this criterion -- and an explicit commitment by participating IHEs (in the form of MOUs) to expand successful programs based on performance data. Its target for 100% of programs for which the public can access achievement and growth data is clearly ambitious, but achievable based on the extraordinary commitment to this reform that is demonstrated.		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	18
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: The state has a solid plan to provide support for the initiatives to be developed under Section D. The flexibility to align some existing professional development funding to these initiatives, the incorporation of a plan to focus on turnaround specialist training and mentoring, and the intention to monitor the validity of program evaluations are all excellent components of the plan. The novice principal induction program -- with a \$20 million project budget -- is innovative and appropriate. The state's plan to base its support and professional development on performance evaluation results is also strong and underscores the state's commitment to this criterion. Its targets are ambitious and achievable, and the explanation of certain targets that have not been provided is appropriate.		
Total	138	110

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state meets the criterion for being able to intervene in low-performing schools and LEAs.		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	35
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state demonstrates a commitment to trying to turnaround low achieving schools and a strong methodology for identifying these schools. The state proposes a well-developed, high-quality plan to support LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools, with reasonable goals -- strong accountability measures, extensive on-going supports for LEAs, additional resources, continuous improvement mechanisms -- and clear strategies. Small details like providing a model MOU for engaging third-party management organizations reflect the state's high degree of sophistication with respect to the complexity of turnarounds. The state's target of approximately 200 schools per year is		

very ambitious and may not be achievable, but it is not unreasonable based on the comprehensiveness of the state's support initiatives. There is no mechanism to ensure that not more than 50% of the schools employ the transformation model, as specified in the criterion. The project budgets for these criteria are reasonable and appropriate.

Total	50	45
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state increased the percentage of revenues used to support education in FY09. The state's school finance formula results in equalized funding across LEAs and schools, with the flexibility that categorical funding can be funded flexibly based on local priorities. This formula meets the criterion (ii) for equitable funding.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	31
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state has a "high" cap on the number of charter schools, multiple authorizers, favorable laws and regulations, and comparable funding. There is no facility funding stream but there are several programs that serve to help charter schools solve the facility challenge. (Note it is not clear whether or how many charter schools actually benefit from the requirements of school districts to provide space under Proposition 39.) The proposal does not address criterion (v) with respect to other innovative schools.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	2
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: In addition to providing some financial flexibility and certain early childhood education initiatives, in January 2010 the state enacted legislation that creates conditions favorable to education reform and the reform models included in the application. The state does not, however, provide evidence that these conditions have yet resulted in positive outcomes.</p>		
Total	55	43

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
<p>Competitive Reviewer Comments: The state's proposal meets the criterion for emphasis on STEM. It appropriately references other sections of its proposal where it integrates its STEM emphasis. The state has previously demonstrated a commitment to promote STEM education, and its proposal will likely increase the quality and rigor of STEM instruction through professional development and alternative certification, involve external stakeholders (e.g., TechNet), and proliferate STEM programs in low-achieving schools and for underrepresented students through the LEA challenge grants.</p>		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
<p>Absolute Reviewer Comments: The state's proposal is comprehensive, coherently addresses all of the criteria, and has sufficiently broad support to have statewide impact. The state has previously demonstrated its commitment to the reform agenda articulated in the notice, and presents a high-quality plan that is focused on improving student achievement and outcomes. The most troubling features of the plan are the low level of teachers union support for the ambitious reform agenda, and the risk that the \$700 million of funds requested by the state for the LEAs (excluding the amounts in the specific project budgets) is deployed as supplementary operating funding and not used explicitly to advance the Race to the Top reforms.</p>		
Total		0
Grand Total	500	387



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

California Application #1400CA-4



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	19
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	2
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	12
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	5

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

California presents a "comprehensive and coherent reform agenda, and clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide" [(A)(1)(i)]. Standards and assessments, data systems, human capital, and school turn around are highlighted as linked elements of the state's RTTT initiative. California does well to frame the RTTT investment as a way to "create conditions for success" and the state clearly lists five major strategies that will "support new ways of doing business." Notable among these five strategies are the themes of encouraging local flexibility and innovation, strengthening local-state partnerships, developing and implementing metric based accountability systems, and increasing parent choice and empowerment. California also is wise to underscore the RTTT grant as a one-time infusion of cash that must be applied to building structures and developing capacities that ideally will not require recurring infusions of Federal assistance. California is to be commended for being honest and evidence-based in noting areas requiring most improvement. Unfortunately, California falls short in "establishing a clear and credible path to achieving these goals" [(A)(1)(i)]. The link between the reform agenda's goals and actions is not strong. Within each of the compelling five strategies (i.e., support local flexibility to stimulate innovation, develop new local-state partnership, etc.), tangible actions are not well explained. For instance, "professional learning communities" are featured as a major action, but not in way that indicates ultimate value in schools and classrooms. Similarly, the "Brokers of Expertise portal," while a brilliant concept, is not shown to be a mechanism that will make a measurable difference in principal and teacher practice. California is most weak relative to this criteria in its marginal success at "securing LEA commitment" [(A)(1)(ii)] and lack of evidence that the level of "LEA participation would translate into statewide impact." To California's credit, the facts of the situation are clearly shared. Unfortunately, too many doubts are raised by only 46.5 % of LEAs signing the MOUs. The participation rate is better for schools, students overall and students in poverty (56, 58 and 61%, respectively), but that still leaves roughly 40 percent of schools and students untouched by RTTT reform. It is difficult to consider this as "statewide impact." In addition, California does not explain the geographic distribution of participating LEAs and to what extent the concentration or dispersion of participating LEAs may be helpful to the cause. For instance, if the participating districts are well dispersed, RTTT-prompted changes in a participating LEA may foster changes in neighboring, non-participating districts. California did not achieve good results with MOU signatures. Local teacher union participation of only 26 percent—at least as conveyed by MOU signatures—suggests that deep reform in participating LEAs, not to mention statewide, will be difficult to achieve. Similarly, it is curious that 22 percent of local school board presidents did not sign the MOUs. Overall, California falls short relative to the reasonable theory of change that a shared commitment to reform among superintendents, board presidents and

union leaders—no matter how difficult to achieve—is essential to major changes in educational practices and student learning.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	9
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	6
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	3

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

California’s treatment of the criteria for “building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain proposed plans” [(A)(2)] is good conceptually but weak practically. As noted earlier, the “professional learning communities” and “Brokers of Expertise portal” are compelling concepts, but there is not good explanation for how these networks (human and virtual) will lead to improved practices in schools and classrooms. Plans call for forging a “new contract” between the state and LEAs, but there is no good explanation—even as a “for instance”—as to how it will lead to local changes in practice. The language is strong regarding performance measures, data systems and analysis, and infrastructure elements, but the link to school and classroom level action is not clearly drawn. California handles well plans for resource acquisition and deployment, at least at a general level. The state does well to highlight the RTTT investment as one-time and thus necessary to be directed at infrastructure and human capacity building—which ideally would not require sustained support at the unique level represented by RTTT. California’s proposed budget—as explained in the body of the proposal and in the attachments—is impressive for its focus on LEAs, with only four percent of RTTT funds staying solely at the state level. The narrative is clear on the purpose of the proposal and the general application of funds. The narrative also explains well how the state-local relationship around funds will operate conceptually—ranging from performance expectations being set by the state and specific plans and monitoring being managed by LEAs. However, the large number of distinct project budgets (26 by this reviewer’s count) is not woven together in the narrative to show how they advance the proposals goals and action plans. The multiple projects can be grouped to line-up with the RTTT’s four major reform elements, but the resulting actions are not clearly explained. Lastly, California does not explain well how work proposed in the proposal will be simultaneously advanced by RTTT funds and other Federal, state and private resources. Similarly, the proposal does not explain in a strong way how the work started with RTTT funds will be continued. As noted earlier, California wisely intends to focus RTTT funds on “one-time expenses,” but even those areas as generally listed will require future investments if deep reform is to occur [(A)(2)(i)]. California shows sophistication in its mix of partners—indicating plans to draw on philanthropy, higher education, parents and business. Again, however, the proposal stops short of explaining actions that will follow from California’s excellent understanding of the nature and limits of RTTT funds and the importance of involving multiple sectors in reform [(A)(2)(ii)].

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	11
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

As conveyed in the proposal, California is working comprehensively to “demonstrate significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps” in student learning [(A)(3)]. However, as the proposal shows, the state’s record is decidedly mixed. California has good evidence of important work in each of the four education reform areas required by RTTT [(A)(3)(i)]. The state would build on efforts and learning with RTTT funding. The state’s pace-setting role in standards is well documented in the proposal. The state’s creation of data systems also is impressive, but the value-added at the school and classroom level is not clear. Human capital development is another California forte, with highly regarded professional standards for teachers and principals, multiple alternative routes to licensure

and credentialing, and an impressive drop in the proportion of “unprepared” teachers from 20% to 3% in recent years. Turning around low performing schools has proven a challenge for California, but the state has learned from these struggles, recognizing now that low performing schools must be dealt with in the context of, and in combination with, their LEAs. California’s results in changing student outcomes are mixed. A strict reading of RTTT’s criteria in this area [(A)(3)(ii)] result in a low score for California. Progress on the CST has been good, as is documented in the proposal. Similar to other states, however, there is a marked discrepancy with NAEP results, which show only modest student achievement and growth. Well acknowledged by California is the difficulty in narrowing achievement gaps among and between subgroups, both on the NAEP and the CST. Lastly, the state’s high school graduation rates have dropped over the past five years, falling back to a level just below the 81% figure in 1996. No explanation is provided in the proposal for this drop and how it may vary among subgroups.

Total	125	39
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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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

“Developing and adopting common standards” [(B)(1)] is a standout area for California’s RTTT proposal. California is actively participating in the NGA/CCSSO Consortium, which includes 48 states and three territories. California—a pioneer in the standards movement—now appears to be fully committed to the need for common core standards across as many states as possible. California will only adopt the new standards if the “meet or exceed their own” standards. To this end, the state has been central to the Consortium’s work by attending national meetings and having top state educational officials and senior staff serve on the Consortium’s three committees [(B)(1)(i)]. The state has passed and instituted laws driving common core standards, and by the requisite dates for RTTT funding. To promote broad ownership, especially among teachers, the legislature established the Academic Content Standards Commission, which will include 21 members appointed by the Governor and legislature, at least half of whom are classroom teachers [(B)(1)(ii)]. Ultimately, California scores high with this criterion because of its proven commitment to being a leader in developing multi-state core standards and adopting them back at home.

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

10

8

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

California is striving to have core standards operate “hand-in-glove” with high-quality assessments. “Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments” [(B)(2)] clearly is a priority for California. Impressively, the state is part of at least three major consortia, and the number of participating states and deadlines for design and implementation meet RTTT’s requirements. California scores high on this criterion, even though the proposal leaves unclear the state’s particular role with the various consortia and the ultimate quality checks that will be applied to the assessments before adoption and implementation.

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

20

15

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

California’s history as documented in this proposal conveys the conundrum of top flight standards not being matched by top flight student outcomes. This section conveys strongly how high quality will be

ensured during adoption and implementation. As a result, California earns high ratings relative to the criterion for "supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments" [(B)(3)]. Most impressive is the logical flow to the state's strategies for how standards and assessments will be the lead piece of a continuous improvement cycle, ideally ensuring improved practices and student achievement and growth. The sequence runs neatly from curriculum frameworks to instructional materials to professional development to assessments to interim assessments to formative assessments to revision of accountability systems. Despite the logic of this model, the proposal does not show how California will ensure school and classroom level adoption on a wide scale. In addition, this section is inconsistent in its attention to levels of schooling: while giving attention to K-8 grades, there is little provided on what will occur for grades 9-12.

Total	70	63
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	6
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: California makes clear statements in the proposal about what is completed, and what is missing, as it moves to "fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system" [(C)(1)]. The continuous improvement cycle featured in this section of the proposal is excellent. More fundamentally, the move to reduce barriers to connecting student data to teacher history is essential to the RTTT process. However, at this point only three of the 12 America COMPETES Act elements are in place in California. Thus, the score on this criterion is at the low end of the scale.		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: California has two good strategies proposed to advance its work on "accessing and using state data" [(C)(2)]. First, California wisely intends to use RTTT funds to expand the data elements in the state's longitudinal data system. Second, in a move smartly taking advantage of advanced technology, the state intends to create a "one-stop shop" portal for all state data. Assuming the incredible range and depth of state data can be clearly organized and presented in a single portal, the idea should ease the access of LEAs and researchers to essential information. California argues that the availability of easily accessible, timely and accurate data will create user momentum--that is, the more LEAs see the data portal as useful, the more likely they will be to contribute and use the state's "one-stop data shop." Not well explained in this section, however, is what mechanisms and incentives will be instituted if LEAs fail to take full advantage of the portal to improve instruction and ultimately student achievement and growth.		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	6
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: "Using data to improve instruction" [(C)(3)] is the final measure of the merits of any data system. California does not adequately explain how its robust data system will make a difference in schools and classrooms. California's MOU requires that LEAs use formative assessments and create local instructional improvement systems to advance data use in instruction [(C)(3)(i)]. California proposes at least three major mechanisms to like data to improving instruction: professional learning communities on data use, professional development modules, and expansion of the Brokers of Expertise portal [(C)(3)(ii)]. California also says that it will, "to the extent allowed under law," make public education data fully available to researchers and other inquiry processes. To ensure quality, availability will be based on applications to a state "institutional review board" and parallel application processes at the LEA level [(C)(3)(iii)]. Each of these mechanisms, and the commitment to data transparency and access, is impressive. Still, the proposal does not convey strongly how these mechanisms will be fully utilized to		

improve instruction. The catch is the extent to which teachers will adopt and implement the knowledge and information conveyed in the professional learning communities, professional development modules and Brokers of Expertise portal.

Total	47	15
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	16
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>California presents strong evidence in the proposal that it excels in “providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals” [(D)(1)]. RTTT’s requisite legal, statutory and regulatory provisions for alternative routes are definite and date back to 1967 [(D)(1)(i)]. Since then, as the proposal conveys, California has continued to enhance the legal and regulatory backbone for alternative paths to the education profession. Multiple paths are available, incorporating institutional resources well beyond higher education[(D)(1)(ii)]. Monitoring is in place, especially for teachers, giving California the capacity to track the status of educator labor markets and “actively use information to address inequitable distribution and help fill shortages.” The current systems for tracking the labor market for principals are not well-built and require attention[(D)(1)(iii)]. California needs to improve how it ensures that teachers and principals coming to the profession through multiple pathways are consistently of high caliber in their effects on student achievement and growth.</p>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	23
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	7
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>California addresses head-on its weakness at “improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance” [(D)(2)]. A major strength of the proposal is that the state will link student achievement and growth to evaluations of educator quality as well as the institutions that feed the educational labor market. The plan impressively links student results to the alternative certification pathways [(D)(2)(i)]. California is smart to create an Evaluation Advisory Group to identify best practices for LEAs, giving the work necessary focus and energy. Peer Assistance and Review is another good quality to California’s teacher evaluation work. However, principal quality has not been systematically evaluated, a challenge given how essential school leadership is to educational reform and student achievement [(D)(2)(ii)]. Unfortunately, the proposal falls well short at the implementation level. Details are not well stated for how the plan’s concepts will be transformed into practice. For instance, the challenge of shifting to a growth model will require more implementation insight than the proposal offers with the proposed “Student Growth Technical Work Group.” The lack of clear implementation plans is particularly apparent when the proposal turns to “conducting annual evaluations” [(D)(2)(iii)]. Contractor designed tools and resources for teachers, as well as major professional development, are highlighted as strategies to advance evaluation processes and related decision making, but not with careful detail. Detail also is lacking regarding the sub-criterion, “using evaluations to inform key decisions” [(D)(2)(iv)]. Good attention is given to developing teachers and principals through the evaluation process, but evidence cannot be found of solid plans for using performance evaluations around matters of compensation, tenure, and termination. Especially troubling at this point in the proposal is the lack of teacher union ownership of the RTTT initiative, which will create a major barrier to California’s plans regarding personnel evaluation and decisions. The proposal lists teacher unions</p>		

as important to the improvement of performance, but does not give evidence for how they will be brought into evaluation and decision processes that will impact many of their members.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	17
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 California clearly addresses its history and current policies and practices in “ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals” [(D)(3)]. Openness is a valued aspect of the section, with the state expressing how it must do better to make sure all students, regardless of LEA or socio-economic standing, benefit from high quality teachers and principals. Fortunately, California has much strength in its systems and efforts to track the distribution of educators. Impressively, the state has been pursuing the issue through multiple approaches—ensuring that the process is not dependent on one program or mechanism. California will use RTTT to advance new strategies designed to improve teacher and principal distribution. Together, the strategies are coherent—establish metrics and develop a system for monitoring; provide technical assistance to LEAs to make use of the metrics and system; and better define categories for effective teachers and principals. The lingering doubt in this section is how the state will follow-on if these strategies are not well implemented by LEAs.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	10
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 California has an excellent model and system in place for “improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs” [(D)(4)]. Most impressive is the direct link with California State University (CSU) in this aspect of the proposed RTTT initiative, since CSU is the institution preparing more than half of the state’s teachers annually. Specifically, the state will draw lessons from a large pilot CSU’s Center for Teacher Quality is conducting in five of the largest urban school districts to link student achievement and growth data to CSU graduates [(D)(4)(i)]. California’s intention to bring CSU’s work to scale by encouraging its adoption in other higher education institutions is wise. Ideally the other institutions would be drawn to the new policies and practices without state intervention, but California is smart to try to use RTTT support to break down institutional silos and barriers. The state has set three strategies to encourage wider adoption of CSU’s work—online reporting of program assessments; incorporating results from effective programs into accreditation requirements; and, supporting expansion or revision of programs based on performance results [(D)(4)(ii)]. Unfortunately, the proposal does not provide enough attention to principal preparation programs, pushing the score down to the “medium” range.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	10
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:
 California presents well its history of “providing effective support to teachers and principals” [(D)(5)]. The state has a notable record of worrying about the induction of new teachers, mentoring them and providing professional development. This history establishes a good foundation for the proposed RTTT initiatives. California by strategy label and category hits all key areas: induction for teachers and principals; professional development on instructional materials; professional development based on performance evaluation; and regionalized assistance to LEAs to develop solid support systems. In addition, the state’s new attention to developing “turnaround leaders and specialists” is creative and apt [(D)(5)(i)]. Not as clear, and thus the reason for the score in the mid-range, is the explanation for how these strategies and plans will make a difference at the school and classroom level. California addresses the evaluation of support programs for teachers and principals [(D)(5)(ii)] by proposing to expand the data system (i.e., CALTIDES) used to track quality. While a good idea, the plan for data system expansion is not accompanied with explanations for how the results would be applied to improve professional development programs.

Total	138	76
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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	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: California has good systems and structures for “intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs” [(E)(1)]. The state learned from working primarily with individual schools. The state has broadened its reach to include the LEAs within which the struggling schools reside. Legal, statutory and regulatory authority is in place. California earns a 10 with this criterion.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	31
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	26
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: Despite the strength of the previous criterion, California has had a mixed record of “turning around the lowest-achieving schools” [(E)(2)]. The state is able to identify the persistently lowest-achieving schools, as well as the LEAs [(E)(2)(i)]. The proposal evidences California’s keen sense of the limitations it faces in bringing failing schools to a better place. No hubris is in evidence on one of the toughest aspects of school reform nationally. California proposes heavy attention to regional level work—just above the LEA level—to help break the barriers to fixing failing schools. Impressively, the Regional Lead Offices will implement a comprehensive set of accountability and support pieces to both foster and force LEAs to turnaround their failing schools. Relative to this criterion, the proposal is strong in terms of clarifying the particulars of proposed work at the LEA and school level. In this section, California strikes the right balance between concept and action, strategy and tactics. This section also benefits from repeated attention to the best use of the likely onetime RTTT funds and the important role of external partners [(E)(2)(ii)].</p>		
Total	50	41

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: California has been doing everything possible to “make education funding a priority” [(F)(1)]. Based solely on the proposal, the evidence is clear that California, despite severe economic and fiscal challenges, has held strong on the share of funding dedicated to K-12 education in the state budget. While the total dollars has dropped substantially, the percentage of the budget allocated to K-12 education rose from 46 percent to 47 percent in the last two fiscal years [(F)(1)(i)]. California also presents good evidence on the extent to which “the state’s policies lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs, and within LEAs, between high poverty schools and other schools” [(F)(1)(ii)]. The state shows how complicated school finance policies are ensuring that LEAs receive comparable support. Unfortunately, the proposal is silent on within-LEA funding matters.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	27

<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: California stands out nationally, as the proposal conveys, with its long and careful attention to charter schools. The state scores nearly a perfect run of points with the criterion “ensuring successful conditions for high performing charter schools and other innovative schools” [(F)(2)]. California has a “high” cap on the number of charters, which has amounted to no restrictions on charter formation over the past several years [(F)(2)(1)]. One of the few areas where the state falls short in the charter school review is a failure to explicate the typical reasons charter schools close in California. The proposal does not present evidence on how many charters closed due to quality problems—a factor important in the criteria [(F)(2)(ii)]. In addition, the proposal leaves reviewers to assume that the large proportion of charters in California are serving typical populations of public school students [(F)(2)(ii)]. California provides multiple funding boosts to charters, including facility assistance, resulting in an even playing field (financially speaking) with traditional public schools [(F)(2)(iii)(iv)]. Lastly, the largest points (eight) were lost because the proposal does not indicate that California “enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools” [(F)(2)(v)].</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: California does a good job of “demonstrating other significant reform conditions” [(F)(3)]. Parent empowerment is essential, as well as the various mechanisms California uses to create a culture of innovation and flexibility, primarily through “education code flexibility,” “categorical flexibility,” and “local budgeting flexibility.” The state demonstrates recognition that a key condition for reform is providing local leaders the capacity to make programmatic and financial decisions—within certain standards and quality parameters—that reflect their local situations. Early childhood also is an essential focus; even though the proposal gives it sparse attention, the state is wise to note that it pays attention to “school readiness” for its children. California falls short of a perfect score in this section for not including evidence of how these various reforms resulted in improved student outcomes and graduation rates.</p>		
Total	55	39

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
<p>Competitive Reviewer Comments: No doubt, California has the multi-sector capacity and plans to pursue a vibrant initiative in STEM. Unfortunately, the proposal does not make that case. As handled in the proposal, STEM would be tacked on, an added minor element, in the RTTT initiative in California. Throughout the proposal, STEM references are dropped into plans and explanations without tying them into the work coherently. In summing up the STEM plans, the proposal only provides a list of actions and activities (albeit many of them exceedingly large actions). Most important, it is not clear from the evidence provided that “a rigorous course of study,” rather than a linked set of separate initiatives, will result from the proposed STEM effort. There is not a comprehensive or coherent plan. Thus, as required in the scoring rubric, no points are awarded for California’s STEM proposal.</p>		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes

Absolute Reviewer Comments:

Yes, California meets the "Absolute Priority – Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform." California makes the case that its RTTT initiative will link deeply standards and assessments, data systems, human capital, and low-achieving schools turn around. California does well to frame the RTTT investment as a way to "create conditions for success." California also is wise to underscore the RTTT grant as a likely one-time infusion of cash that must be applied to building technical structures and developing capacities that ideally will not require recurring infusions of Federal assistance. California is to be commended for being honest and evidence-based in noting areas requiring most improvement. The less than 50 percent rate of participation among LEAs threatens the statewide value of RTTT funding in California; and the 26 percent participation rate of local union presidents also is troubling. However, these disappointing rates of participation by LEAs and local unions do not immediately end California's chances for funding (as a "no" score relative to the Absolute Priority would do). Throughout the proposal California loses points for lack of implementation plans and details. Specific details are impossible in a proposal of such immense magnitude, but California could have struck a better balance between concept and action, strategy and tactics. Too much is at stake with a massive RTTT grant to California not to know with more clarity how the impressive array of concepts and strategies would be implemented to advance policies and practices at the school and classroom level.

Total		0
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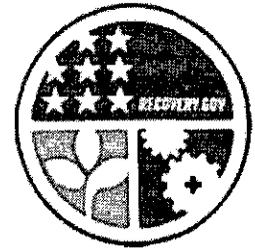
Grand Total	500	273
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

California Application #1400CA-5



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	43
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. The proposal sets forth a coherent and comprehensive reform agenda with clear and measurable goals for each of the RTTT reform areas and the system as a whole. There is a strong emphasis on measuring performance against the goals, and a plan for ensuring that appropriate measures are in place. Three types of "strategic investments" are delineated for the use of RTTT funds: building infrastructure supports, creating and testing reform approaches, and building evaluation capacity. These provide a useful organizer for analyzing the state's capacity to implement and sustain RTTT reforms. Implementation strategies include supporting local flexibility, developing strong state/LEA partnerships supporting reforms, developing clear accountability metrics, increasing choice and parent empowerment, and encouraging local innovation. These appear to be reasonable strategies that have the potential to increase educator and public engagement in enacting the plan. ii. The participating LEAs comprise 46.5% of California's school districts, 56.3% of public schools, 58.3% of students, and 60.9% of students in poverty. CA used the model participating LEA MOU provided by USED, and added additional voluntary commitments in areas such as STEM, technology, English Language Learning, and early childhood education. Participating LEAs were not permitted to opt out of any of the core MOU requirements, so all are agreeing to 100% of the MOU requirements. Of the 468 participating LEAs with bargaining units, 122 MOUs (26%) were signed by the president of the teachers' union, bringing into question the extent to which the non-signing participating LEAs will actually implement the intended RTTT reforms, especially for teacher effectiveness. Of the 603 districts where school board president signatures were applicable, 78% were signed by the board president. The reason for non-signature was not provided. As evidenced in the detailed table for this section, the participating LEAs include CA's largest districts and those with the highest poverty proportions, including Los Angeles Unified, San Francisco, Oakland, and Fresno. In general, this represents a fair participation rate and a potentially strong commitment on the part of participating LEAs to implement RTTT reforms (with the teachers' union and board president exceptions noted). iii. The extent of LEA participation (including rural, suburban, and the largest urban districts) combined with the strength of the MOUs would indicate that CA's RTTT plan has the potential to translate into fairly broad statewide impact. The caveat would be questions about board president and teachers' union support in those districts where the applicable signatures were not obtained.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	28
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

i. The proposal outlines a viable plan to support and hold accountable participating LEAs by utilizing and strengthening the state's regional support system of 11 regional county superintendent collaboratives. The LEAs, the regional support providers, and the SEA will be held accountable for meeting specific performance benchmarks. The proposal does a good job of describing how data analysis will inform continuous improvement of grant activities, service delivery, and LEA performance. A unique feature of this proposal is the *addition of an independent evaluation of RTTT implementation that will provide periodic reports to the state legislature.* Strategic uses of RTTT funds target one-time infrastructure investments, with other state and federal funds supporting their subsequent maintenance and continuous improvement. The budget projects accurately and logically reflect and support the RTTT plan as outlined in (A)(2)(i). ii. Tangible stakeholder support is evident by the inclusion of customized MOUs. For example, IHEs have committed to collaborative standards alignment activities, and private foundations have agreed to align their grant-making criteria with those of RTTT. Other statements of support indicate a broad range of stakeholder interest and commitment, including the state charter school association. However, no evidence of support was provided from CA teachers' unions/associations.

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

30 23

(i) Making progress in each reform area

5 5

(ii) Improving student outcomes

25 18

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

i. The proposal adequately describes progress made in recent years related to the four RTTT reform areas. The proposal demonstrates that CA has aligned its state and federal education funding, including ARRA funds, with RTTT priorities. ii. Evidence provided in the proposal demonstrates steady student performance gains since 2002 on state tests in English/Language Arts and Mathematics, paralleled by steady gains since 1994 in Reading (grade 4) and Mathematics (grades 4 and 8) on NAEP. The evidence also demonstrates slight narrowing of white/black and white/Hispanic achievement gaps. The proposal explains that direct cause-and-effect links are not possible to make, but the state credits its 10-year commitment to standards implementation and support for documented *gains in student performance.* The proposal reports that high school graduation rates have remained relatively flat for approximately the past 15 years.

Total

125 94

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

i. CA is participating in the CCSSO/NGA Common Core state standards initiative. These standards will be internationally benchmarked and will build toward high school graduation and career readiness. The consortium consists of 48 states, the District of Columbia, and two territories, a significant number of participants. The proposal includes the membership MOU and a copy of the draft standards. ii. The proposal indicates a commitment to adopt the standards before August 2, 2010, through a process of state board adoption adequately described in the proposal. While the proposal outlines a clear plan to

adopt the standards, this is not the same as standards implementation, i.e., the transition to standards in the classroom...see comments in (B)(3) below.		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. The proposal indicates that CA has joined the Balanced Assessment Consortium which is working to develop and implement common, high-quality assessments aligned with the Common Core Standards.</p> <p>ii. The Balanced Assessment Consortium includes more than 30 states, which is a significant number.</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	12
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal outlines a plan to support the statewide transition to new standards and assessments, which includes new curriculum frameworks, professional development, and expanded availability of assessment exemplars. The state controls adoption of K-8 curriculum materials, so this has the potential to speed up the classroom incorporation of new standards in those grades. The plan relies on information sharing to achieve a similar incorporation through materials adoption in high schools, which may be less effective. Other than a public comment period prior to standards adoption, the plan lacks public engagement components outside of the educator community. Although the regional support system is described in Part A of the application as being a key delivery/support mechanism for RTTT reforms, no role for the regional providers is described in the standards transition plan.</p>		
Total	70	62

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	6
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal indicates that the state has completed 3 of the 12 America COMPETES longitudinal data system elements: #6 yearly test records, #7 information on students not tested, and #8 teacher identifier. This lag in system development results in low points for this criterion.</p>		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>As described in (C)(1), the state has a long way to go to complete the required elements of its longitudinal data system. The plan calls for either IES or RTTT funding to add the missing elements and bring the system fully on line. The proposal describes supplemental elements the state will add to its system, such as Career/Technical education data, ACT/SAT data, and information on student and teacher attendance. The state has also recently approved the expanded availability of state education data for research use. A user-friendly data portal is planned under the RTTT initiative. In all, this plan meets the requirements for this criterion. There seems to be an expectation that users will have intrinsic motivation to use these systems, and some details of implementation were vague.</p>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	6
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. While the state's plan calls for all participating LEAs to adopt local instructional improvement systems, the proposal is rather loose in that it only references helping districts to assess their options for adopting such systems. A stronger proposal would have the state recommending a specific system or set of systems that meet RTTT qualifications. Without some standardization across local systems, it will be difficult to aggregate data across LEAs for purposes of identifying effective practices and/or</p>		

areas in need of improvement. ii. While the proposal outlines a plan to create professional learning communities focused on the use of data to improve instruction, the plan hinges on helping educators to understand their local instructional improvement systems. As noted in (i) above, with a broad range of systems available for local adoption, it is not feasible to develop standard professional development modules that will accommodate the nuances of all the available systems. Once again, as in Section B, there is no role defined for the regional support system in this professional development endeavor. iii. The proposal describes how the state plans to make its state-level data available to researchers. However, it is not clear as to how data from the local instructional improvement systems will be made available, if at all. If the local data is made available, the problem described in (i) regarding the comparability of data across diverse systems will be problematic.

Total	47	16
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	21
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
i. The proposal provides strong evidence that the state has statutory provisions for alternative educator certification that allow multiple routes that include those providers other than IHEs. Most of the available routes meet most or all of the RTTT alternative route definition elements. All programs are required to establish rigorous selection criteria and to offer testing and early completion options in lieu of regular coursework. ii. The proposal provides detailed evidence about those alternative routes currently in use. iii. The proposal adequately explains the systems operating in the state to track educator supply-and-demand data and to develop and deliver programs to train teachers for high need fields and specialty areas. The proposal also describes new programs designed specifically to prepare principals for high-need schools.		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	43
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	20
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
i. The proposal describes the state's plan to shift its accountability system to the use of a student growth model. However, the proposal does not describe how alternative student growth measures will be established for subjects/grades that are currently untested by the state, or how the impending transition to new assessments based on the new Common Core standards will be managed in the context of the growth model and educator evaluation system. ii. The proposal adequately describes CA's planned work, to be undertaken with teacher and principal involvement, to develop evaluation systems that meet the RTTT criteria, including multiple rating categories. However, the lack of explanation regarding alternate student growth measures for grades/subjects untested by the state [see comments in (i) of this section] makes it difficult to see how this system will apply to all educators. iii. The proposal includes the implementation of an annual evaluation schedule and the provision of timely and useful feedback to teachers and principals. The addition of a peer evaluation/feedback element to the evaluation model will enhance the incorporation of timely feedback. iv. The proposal puts forth a logical 3-phase plan to use the evaluation system for informing decisions: (a) evaluation system adoption in participating LEAs, (b) use of the system for decisions regarding professional development, compensation, promotion, and retention; and (c) use of the system for decisions regarding certification/tenure and removal of ineffective educators. However, as stated in other		

comments for this section, the lack of explanation regarding alternative student growth measures for untested grades/subjects makes it difficult to see how this decision-making system will apply to all educators.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	25
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10
<p>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. The proposal includes a viable plan to shift the state's monitoring of teacher and principal distribution to include the new evaluation measures of teacher effectiveness. The plan <i>builds on current efforts to monitor teacher distribution based on qualifications and experience. These current efforts include incentives for effective teachers and leaders to staff high-poverty and/or high-minority schools, such as financial rewards, class size reduction, and improved working conditions. The proposal logically delays the setting of performance targets until baseline data for the newly defined effectiveness measures is established.</i> ii. The plan also includes reasonable incentives to ensure effective teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas, along with dedicated teacher preparation pipelines in shortage areas such as mathematics, science, and special education. As additional support for these efforts, state law allows differential compensation for teaching in these areas.</p>		
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	12
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. The proposal describes a plan to revamp the evaluation of preparation programs by incorporating value-added data on program graduates based on student growth measures. However, no detail is provided regarding how these measures will be developed, especially for those subjects and grades not tested on state assessments. A positive element to the plan is that the large IHE systems in the state have signed MOUs committing them to these changes. ii. The IHEs have also agreed in the signed MOUs to expand, modify, or close programs based on evaluations of graduate effectiveness that include student growth data.</p>		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	10
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. The proposal describes a plan to build upon its statewide, well-established induction and mentoring program for new teachers and its current content knowledge enhancement offerings by creating a regional, job-embedded professional development support system based on educator needs identified through the new evaluation process. <i>Details are scanty regarding how this system will be created and maintained, and what types of professional development offerings may be anticipated. The plan also includes specialized training support for "turnaround specialists" in each of the state's 11 regional support areas. Again, no description is provided of the types of supports this training will offer.</i> ii. Most of the description of measurement/evaluation of the proposed supports concerns participation rates, not participant outcomes. Recognizing that cause-and-effect evaluations are challenging, nonetheless, specific types of potential outcome measures can and should be provided. Without such measures, it is not possible to determine how the state plans to continuously improve its professional development offerings.</p>		
Total	138	111

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The proposal provides sufficient evidence that the state has the legal authority to intervene in both the lowest-achieving schools and the lowest-achieving LEAs.		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	25
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	20
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: i. The proposal identifies 187 persistently lowest-achieving schools, including high schools that would be Title-I eligible but do not receive Title I funds, using a viable methodology consistent with RTTT intent. This method appears to accurately identify the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools as defined in the RTTT application notice. ii. The proposal provides evidence that not only the signed MOUs, but also state law, require persistently lowest-achieving schools to implement one of the four RTTT intervention models. It is not clear from the narrative how the state will manage the RTTT limitation on the use of the transformation model. The documentation provided for the state's historical performance with school turnaround indicates that the past focus has largely been on changing school inputs, with limited success. The new plan calls for strengthening the roles of both the LEA and the regional support services in school turnaround, but an essential switch in focus from inputs and process management to attainment of specific outcomes is not well-described. The proposal is vague as to the types of progress benchmarks that will be required of the participating schools and LEAs.		
Total	50	35

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	6
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: i. The proposal provides evidence that, despite large state budget deficits, CA INCREASED its relative share of state funding for public education from FY2008 to FY2009, from 46% to 47.4%. ii. The proposal narrative regarding funding equity seems to conflate equity with equalization, and the question of intra-district equity among schools is not addressed.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	30
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: i. The proposal provides evidence that CA has a "high cap" on its number of charter schools, such that if it were filled, the number of charters would be greater than 10% of the state's public schools. ii. The proposal provides detailed descriptions of state regulations regarding charter school approval and accountability, including significant emphasis on student achievement. The proposal cites state regulations that charter schools must substantially reflect the student population of the LEA. The proposal indicates that since charter schools can be approved locally and at the county level, as well as by the state, the state does not collect systematic data on reasons for denial or non-renewal. The data provided indicate that each year, a number of charter schools are closed, but the reasons are not provided. The plan calls for establishing a state-level data system to collect and analyze charter schools information. iii. The proposal provides evidence that state law requires equitable funding for charter schools. iv. The proposal provides evidence that the state has provided several mechanisms for charter school facilities financing, including set-asides from public district general obligation bonds. v. The proposal does not address how the state enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools.		

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	0
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: While the narrative provides three examples of reforms (strengthening parent roles, waivers/flexibility, and early childhood education, no evidence is provided that these reforms have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other measurable outcomes.		
Total	55	36

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The plan, as described, does not seem to add substantially to the existing efforts in the state to increase the availability of mathematics and science teachers. Planned activities are very general, such as "facilitating professional learning communities" or "embracing hands-on inquiry methods," but offer no specific plans for offering rigorous courses of study for students, or preparing more students (other than prospective teachers) for STEM careers. The plan is insufficiently developed to meet the competitive priority.		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The CA application takes a comprehensive approach with ambitious yet achievable goals. The proposal indicates intent to meet the full extent of the RTTT requirements. The state has done an adequate job of addressing the four "pillars" of RTTT in its application. The relatively high percentage of participating districts and the strength of the MOUs governing their participation indicate strong potential for grassroots support and statewide impact.		
Total		0
Grand Total	500	354