



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Georgia Application #2160GA-1



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(A)(1)(i) The State of Georgia has presented a comprehensive, coherent, and compelling reform agenda for K-12 education in its state. They have clearly articulated important, ambitious, and achievable goals that, if implemented effectively and supported long-term, will have a very positive impact on children, educators, schools, and the future workforce and families in Georgia. Not long ago, Georgia was listed near the bottom of U.S. States on most measures of academic achievement and graduation success among primary and secondary students. Since 2002, Georgia's reform efforts have led to positive increases in student achievement and have moved the State from the bottom quartile to the top quartile of states that are aggressively pursuing promising reforms to benefit its children, families, and long-term economic interests. Georgia has outlined six important and achievable goals that focus on (a) developing, fielding and retaining highly effective teachers and school leaders; (b) increasing high school graduation rates, (c) preparing high school graduates for post-secondary and careers success; and (c) ensuring its State Department of Education is fully aligned to its goals and objectives, and accountable to academic and financial results. Georgia doesn't single out "student achievement" in its goals, but appropriately stays focused on higher level goals that can only be achieved through high performance and success of students in school. Georgia cites several specific examples of how its Strategic Plan for Education and existing reform initiatives align with the four core focuses of Race to the Top. To ensure they maximize their potential to succeed, Georgia's Governor established the Alliance of Education Agency Heads (2005), which includes the leaders of Georgia's seven education agencies and is chaired by its State Superintendent for K-12 education. The Alliance, which also includes the leaders of top business associations, non-education government agencies, and nonprofits is responsible for ensuring Georgia's educational policies and programs facilitate the preparation of Georgia's future – its young people – and to ensure the next generation is prepared to move Georgia forward in the future. The Strategic Plan created by the Alliance served as the basis for Georgia's Race to the Top grant, and are the goals that are presently guiding education reform in the State. Furthermore, Georgia's application presents a clear and credible path to achieving its aims – to equip all Georgia students with the knowledge and skills that empower them to (1) graduate from high school, (2) be successful in college and/or professional careers, (3) and be competitive with their peers throughout the United States and the world. (A)(1)(ii) Georgia has secured the commitment of 23 (12.7%) of its LEAs to participate in the State's Race to the Top competition. All 23 LEAs have agreed to participate in 100% of Georgia's RTTT Plan. The Preliminary Scope of Work, which is attached as an exhibit to Georgia's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), lays out in specific detail, what RTTT focus areas and reforms Georgia SEA and LEAs are committing to implement and support. The MOU explains the partnership between Georgia and its participating LEAs in great detail as well. The LEA superintendent and school board president each have expressed their support for the MOU. Georgia lists the signature of the teacher's

union representative as "not applicable", therefore, indicating that the State does not have or need union support to implement its objectives. (A)(1)(iii) Though Georgia has a very small percentage of LEAs participating in the RTTT application, the LEAs serve a significant percentage of the state's students and employ nearly half of its teachers. Participating LEAs educate 41% of all Georgia students, 52% of Georgia's African American students, 48% of its Hispanic students, 46% of students in poverty, and employ 40% of the State's teachers. Within the 23 LEAs are 34 of the State's lowest performing schools (55% of the state total). Georgia presents subgroup student achievement goals for the NAEP, its state assessment and high school graduation test, and high school graduation rates. Georgia's growth goals for students completing its state assessment in 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade are ambitious and reflect a clear desire to eliminate achievement gaps between subgroups by 2013-14. However, setting 2013-14 goals that would have 96% of students across all subgroups "meeting the standards" in math (for example) may be too ambitious and unrealistic when considering how students achieved on Georgia's state ESEA assessment in the past. In this case, Georgia sets the bar high, but setting it too high could reduce the drive for schools and educators to reach it. Also, Georgia does not label its data tables to show the reader what level of data they are looking at. Instead, Georgia identifies whether or not its students "met the standards", but they don't define what the standard is: basic or proficient. If the answer is (or equivalent to) "basic" level of proficiency, then the goals are more realistic. Georgia's goals also reflect a serious commitment to increasing the graduation rates of its high school students. Their goals are achievable given how much progress Georgia has made in graduating its students in the past decade. For example, between 2002-03 and 2008-09, the graduation rate of Black students increased from 53% to 74%. Likewise, the Hispanic student graduation rate increased from 49% to 71% and the white student rate increased as well, from 71% to 83%. Setting graduation rate goals of 82% for Black students, 79% for Hispanic students, and 89% for white students is well within reach. Finally, Georgia began work in 2008 on a statewide data system that will allow it to track the post-secondary enrollment of the State's high school graduates. This system, along with the state's college access supports (state sponsored college scholarships, early college high schools, etc.) further bolsters Georgia's potential to succeed in achieving its goals. Though Georgia has a relatively small number of LEAs participating, those participating still serve half of the State's student body and a significant percentage of high needs subgroups of students. As a result, fewer points were withheld than otherwise would have been for (A)(1)(iii).

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7	7	

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(A)(2)(i)(a) Georgia has presented a very elaborate and well thought-through plan for how it will manage the implementation and provide oversight for its Race to the Top Grant. Georgia's RTTT Initiative is a collaboration between the Governor's Office and the Georgia Department of Education and informed by a diverse group of stakeholders who provide leadership and expertise inside and outside of government. Georgia's RTTT effort is guided by an Executive Board that includes the Governor, State Superintendent, and the Chair of the State Board of Education. A steering committee led by senior leadership in the Governor's office and the Georgia Department of Education is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the initiative. Georgia provides a very comprehensive description in its budget narrative of who will be responsible for the day-to-day leadership and workload in each reform area of RTTT. They are very precise about which departments and personnel will be responsible for the work. By using existing staff positions and adding other key positions, only as necessary – such as the new Superintendent for School Turnaround position, Georgia's Department of Education is using RTTT as an opportunity to redefine its operational structure and build its operational capacity, which in the long run, will help Georgia ensure it can sustain its reform initiatives after the RTTT grant expires. They are also structuring their use of RTTT dollars to ensure similar structures and capacities are built at the district and school levels to successfully implement and sustain change. (A)(2)(i)(b) In addition to deploying and strengthening systems, human resources, and operational capacities at the SEA, Georgia is also structuring their use of RTTT dollars to ensure similar

structures and capacities are built at the district and school levels to successfully implement and sustain change. In doing so, they provide a clear explanation of the delineation of responsibilities and authorities at the all level of the K-12 education hierarchy in Georgia - from the State Board of Education to the school. Georgia further describes how it will support building local capacity, including identify and disseminating best practices on RTTT reforms, establishing a Summer Leadership Academy for district and school leaders (focusing particularly on the lowest performing schools), providing an online set of case studies on RTTT efforts in the state, and partnering with teacher recruitment and support organizations to provide importance services and staff capacity to LEAs. (A)(2)(i)(c)(d) Georgia's plans represent a very thoughtful plan for managing and distributing its RTTT funds, and ensuring that its operational capacity is consistent with the needs of its planned efforts. The Chief Financial Officer at the Georgia Department of Education will oversee the budgeting, fund disbursement, tracking and monitoring, and report creation functions for RTTT. Georgia will also hire two additional full time personnel to manage, disburse, monitor, and report on the use of RTTT funding. Other Georgia Department of Education offices will be involved in management and oversight of key functions as well. For example, the Georgia Office of Student Achievement will oversee an ongoing program evaluation. Georgia's RTTT Executive Board is wisely focused on the amount effort it will take to build the capacity of its State Agencies as they seek to build the capacity of LEAs and schools to implement and drive RTTT locally. Georgia plans to hire technical support through a competitive bidding process to assist it with implementation and capacity building for the first 12 to 18 months of its grant. They also plan to hire technical support to assist select Districts and its state agencies to define strategies and opportunities to reallocate funds to bolster and sustain RT3 efforts. Georgia is also committed to establishing a state Innovation Fund, in which it will invest public funding and seek private matching dollars. The fund will target funding towards RTTT participating schools for activities that supplement RTTT focus areas. Georgia has also included plans for managing communications around its RTTT initiative. Given the high visibility of the RTTT effort and the tremendous opportunity it presents to strengthen education in Georgia, the Executive Board is wise to ensure its internal and external communications are handled with great care. Georgia did not speak about allowing Districts to use other federal title program funding or state funds to support RTTT initiatives. Some points were withheld as a result. (A)(2)(i)(e) Georgia indicates that it has pending legislation that will be introduced in 2010 that is specifically meant to implement changes consistent with its reform efforts expressed in its RTTT application. Two components of this legislation are (1) the establishment of a new Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM) and Leadership Effectiveness Measure (LEM) and (2) a new Career Teacher Certificate. The TEM and LEM will measure teacher and leader quality based in part on the growth and performance of their students and will be factored into criteria for the Career Teacher Certificate. The new legislation posits that a teacher who achieves above the average threshold for teachers on the TEM will be able to renew their license for five years. Those who achieve below the threshold will not be able to renew their license. The new teacher certification will be renewable every five years. Through this new certificate and pending legislation, Georgia is demonstrating the political will and commitment to seek changes important to its reform agenda. Through their new certificate and TEM, they are also increasing accountability for teachers and providing a bar of effectiveness that will separate effective teachers from those who are ineffective, thereby increasing the talent level of educators who are children in Georgia. (A)(2)(ii)(a) As part of its RTTT planning process, Georgia surveyed teachers, school administrators and paraprofessionals and support staff across the state. They received 20,507 respondents of which 15,300 were teachers and 1,260 were school administrators. The survey found the majority of teachers in support of initiatives proposed in Georgia's RTTT application. For example, 81% of teachers agreed that "a common, statewide teacher evaluation system" would benefit teachers, 80% agreed that "teachers should be evaluated based on classroom observation (of planning and instruction) and the degree to which they've helped students grow academically," 83% agreed that "all teacher preparation programs should review the student achievement impact of their graduates to strengthen their preparation practices." The available survey data demonstrates a strong desire on the part of educators in Georgia to implement reforms consistent with RTTT's focus areas and Georgia's application. As a result, full points were awarded. (A)(2)(ii)(b) Georgia included a number of letters of support from stakeholders in its application. Letters represented government, education (K-20), business, philanthropy, key partners, and legislative support. However, there were no letters of support from community, civil rights, civic association, or other groups that represent or provide important supports and services to the general public, parents, or students. These voices and their experience should have been included as equal participants in the conversation about school reform in Georgia and factored into the State's RTTT Plan. They are the clients,

customers, funders (taxes), and potential supporters of Georgia's schools. The participation of these key stakeholders is not reflected in Georgia's application. Points were withheld as a result.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	18	18	

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(A)(3)(i) Georgia has made considerable progress in several RTTT reform areas. The state indicates it already has a set of rigorous, internationally and nationally benchmarked standards that were fully implemented across all grade levels in 2009. Georgia also realigned its ESEA and high school graduation assessments to its standards and had its assessments reviewed and approved by the U.S. Department of Education; one of the few states in the Country to accomplish this. Georgia is also a leader in the Consortia that are focused on developing the Common Core State Standards and related college and career-ready assessments. Additionally, Georgia has received large grants to strengthen its ability to track its K-12 students from kindergarten through college and to inform teacher practices consistent with preparing students for college and careers. Finally, Georgia has established a technology based evaluation system that assesses teachers, in part, based on student achievement and just completed testing this new system with educators across the state. They have a similar assessment in development for school leaders. While Georgia has a wonderful array of measurement tools for teachers, students, and school leaders, they provide little detail on the training, coaching, or mentoring they have provided teachers to improve their practice. There were no explanations regarding how, in the past, they've used the ARRA, federal, or state resources to address the Great Leaders and Teachers section of its application. (A)(3)(ii)(a) Georgia's students have made gains since 2003 in every grade on the NAEP exam except in 8th grade reading and math. Their data also reflects a drop off in results across the board in certain years, but this was due to the new standards, assessments and cut scores Georgia introduced between 2005 and 2009. Georgia presents the percentage of students scoring at, what is equivalent to, basic levels of proficiency in reading and math. Preferably, Georgia would set the bar higher and highlight the number of students who are at or above proficient on the NAEP and the equivalent standard on their state assessment. The purpose of Race to the Top, as described in the RTTT Federal Notice, is to make investments in States that are "trailblazing effective reforms" and are committed to "adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy." With this in mind, Georgia's inclusion of "basic" achievement levels in its student achievement goals promotes low expectations and is in direct conflict with a grant program that is investing in efforts to prepare children college and careers. Georgia's low bar for student achievement undermines the significant strengths of its application and calls into question the State's commitment to ensuring the children of Georgia are proficient learners and prepared to succeed in college, careers, and life. Therefore, Points were withheld for Georgia's lack of progress in 8th grade reading and math and for its low threshold for student achievement. (A)(3)(ii)(b) Georgia presented an exceptional explanation and data comparisons showing progress they've made in closing the achievement gap since 2003. Georgia is marginally closing the achievement gap between majority and minority students in math and reading on the NAEP and its state assessment. Comparing itself to other states, Georgia presents data that shows its gap is closing at the same rate or faster than other U.S. states in closing the achievement gap. Georgia is seeing the greatest gains being made by Hispanic students. However, the gap between white and black students remains relatively unchanged. While Georgia realized positive growth among white and black students in 4th and 8th grade reading and math, only in 8th grade math did black students make "significant" gains to close the achievement gap. Subgroups of students moving forward at same pace is important, but it is not reducing the achievement gap. Points have been withheld as a result. (A)(3)(ii)(c) Georgia indicates that it is using the Leaver Rate for calculating its graduation rate, which is a less accurate method than the "cohort rate" calculation that Georgia says it is moving to in 2011. As result, the accuracy of Georgia's graduation rate presented in this application is questionable. However, the data presented shows that the graduation rate for all student subgroups has increased since 2002-03, but the graduation rate of black and Hispanic students has increased at a pace 2

times that of white students over this time period. Significant progress was achieved, in spite of students having to take a high school graduation exam. Georgia points to its roll out of new state standards, professional development and mentoring programs for teachers, and "effective intervention" in low achieving schools as being primary contributing factors to their progress. Georgia being able to explain why, in detail, its students are progressing is one important reason why they are receiving high points in this area.

Total	125	111	111	
-------	-----	-----	-----	--

**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(B)(1)(i) Georgia is participating in the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI), which is jointly led by the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. As a member of this Consortium, which includes 48 states and the District of Columbia, Georgia is committed to adopting the internationally benchmarked, college and career ready Common Core standards when they are completed. As evidence, they have included a copy of a signed Memorandum of Understanding to adopt CCSS in the appendix of its application that demonstrates their commitment. Additionally, Georgia's Governor co-chairs CCSSI for the National Governor's Association, which also serves a clear sign of the State's commitment to implementing CCSSI. A draft copy of standards for English-Language Arts and Mathematics are available in the appendix. All points have been assigned to Georgia for meeting these criteria. (B)(1)(ii) Georgia has outlined a clear process for adopting the Common Core State Standards. The Georgia Department of Education has already worked to ensure that the Common Core State Standards are adequately aligned with its state standards. Georgia plans to vet CCSSI with multiple stakeholders groups and submit them for action to the State Board of Education in 2010. The process Georgia outlines is exceptionally clear, well thought through, and demonstrates a solid understanding what it will take to win adoption of CCSSI in the State. All points have been assigned to Georgia for meeting these criteria.

<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	10	10	10	
--	----	----	----	--

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(B)(2) Georgia has signed a preliminary Memorandum of Understanding with three different Consortia that are focused on developing assessments that measure the Common Core State Standards. The Consortium led by the Council of Chief State School Officers has 36 participating states; the Consortium led by Achieve has 27 states; and the Consortium led by Florida has 14 states. Each signed MOU is available in the Appendix. Because Georgia feels its state academic standards are already well aligned with CCSSI, and that its ESEA state assessment is aligned with its standards, it will use its assessment to evaluate student performance against CCSSI until a common assessments for CCSSI is available. All points have been assigned to Georgia for meeting these criteria.

<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	20	14	14	
--	----	----	----	--

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(B)(3) Georgia presents a very solid set of plans for how it will support a statewide transition to CCSS. The State has defined action steps, timelines, and specific activities it will engage in to prepare educators and students for the RTTT supported changes and enhancements. Georgia is pursuing unique changes to move their reform agenda forward. Among them include (a) requiring that Science be a second AYP indicator so that science is emphasized in elementary and middle schools, (b) that students' advancement through school depend on their growth in proficiency rather than completing a class, and (c) promote its Move On When Ready program that allows 11th and 12th graders who are college ready to enroll in higher education early and still earn their high school diploma. One concern about Georgia's Plan is that it makes the State appear that it is positioning itself to provide virtually all of the training and support for school leaders, teachers, and related staff rather than empowering Districts to do this. There are no specific mentions about building the capacity of local districts to support reforms in their schools or of efforts the State will take to training and strengthening the competence of District leaders to lead reforms among their teachers. This operational model is unsustainable and will do little to help manifest changes at the District level if District administrative and support personnel, and teacher and principal leaders in schools, are not part of the apparatus that's moving change forward at the school level. Points were withheld for this reason.

Total	70	64	64	
-------	----	----	----	--

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully Implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	20	20	

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(C)(1) Georgia has implemented 10 of the 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act as evidence by a matrix provided within Georgia's application and a December 2, 2009 press release in the Appendix that highlights the Data Quality Campaign's recognition of State as meeting these standards. Two points were given for every element Georgia has implemented; two elements are "in [the] process" of being implemented so points were withheld for those.

**(C)(2) Accessing and using State data**

5	5	5	
---	---	---	--

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(C)(2) Georgia has a very solid plan for ensuring that data from the State's statewide longitudinal data system is accessible to multiple stakeholders, including parents, teachers, policy makers, and researchers. Georgia's plan was developed by the State's Alliance of Education Agency Heads, which together provide governance and leadership of the continuum of Preschool to College in the State. The system will bring that will be provided to stakeholder groups. The process for developing Georgia's data plan was very inclusive and the final plans were well thought through. The MOU, which is available in the appendix, along with the activity chart in the application provide specific details on Georgia's plan and a visual organizational chart is provided in the application that shows the agencies, departments and persons responsible for the data system. Additionally, the Agency heads signed a joint Memorandum of Understanding that addresses how the data system will be governed, managed and maintained, and the type of access available in the appendix, and the activity chart in the application provide details on Georgia's plan and a visual organizational chart is provided in the application that shows showing the agencies, departments and persons responsible for the data system.

**(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction**

18	16	16	
----	----	----	--

**(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(C)(3)(i-ii) Georgia states more than once that it will "encourage" LEAs participating in RT3 that don't presently have an instructional improvement system to adopt one (see Activity 1 in this section). A high

quality plan for "increasing" the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems would require LEAs to have a system. Encouragement won't necessarily lead to districts adopting such systems. Georgia goes on to state that it will "require" participating LEAs to provide "effective professional development to teachers and principal" on instructional improvement systems that are already in place (see Activity 11). In other words, if LEAs don't have a system, Georgia will not require them to adopt one. Georgia also shares a lot about that the state will do to help teachers acquire skills to use such systems, but they don't say much about what they'll do to help principals and administrators do the same. Georgia's model also doesn't speak to the State's role in working with LEAs to build their capacity to help their teachers and leaders make use of a new or existing instructional improvement system. Such professional development offered and applied locally would lead to greater opportunity to manifest, problem solve, and sustain reforms in the future. Points were withheld as a result. (C)(3)(III) Georgia stressed commitment to making data available to researchers but they don't present a "plan" for how they will do that. There is no explanation of how data will be made available to researchers, how researchers will be able to access the data, or what supports will be in place at the state or district levels to help researchers access and make use of the data.

Total	47	41	41	
-------	----	----	----	--

**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	18	15	

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(D)(1)(i) Georgia's state, enacted in 2000 as the "A Plus Education Reform Act", gives its Professional Standards Commission (PSC) the authority over traditional and alternative teacher and principal certification programs, including the authority to establish and authorize programs. The PSC is authorized to authorize teacher and principal preparation programs that are offered by LEAs, institutions of higher education, and Regional Education Service Agencies. Non-higher education programs are allowed to operate entirely independent of higher education institutions. (D)(1)(ii) The Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy (GaTAPP) are selective and accelerated programs that offer on-the-job teacher training, as well as supervision and coaching by a Candidate Support Team, to participants who must have a bachelor's degree, pass the Georgia teacher licensure exam and possess mastery level content knowledge in the area they will teach. Georgia also has the Permit Program, which is an alternative route to certification for Principals. The program requires candidates have a masters degree and "a minimum of 3 years of business, management, and leadership and/or instructional experiences acceptable to employment in a school system." No specific types of providers are promoted or prohibited by state law. There are presently 27 approved GaTAPP programs. In 2008-09, GaTAPP programs produce a significant number of Georgia's new teaching workforce, supplying 22% of Georgia's new teachers compared to 28% of teachers educated through traditional education programs operated by Georgia colleges and universities. Teachers completing the alternative route are eligible for a standard Georgia teaching license. (D)(1)(iii) Georgia presently uses an unsophisticated process of assessing different data (e.g., pending retirements, enrollment predictions, etc.) annually to monitor, evaluate and identify teacher and principal shortage areas. However, Georgia indicates that it is presently building a system that will provide more robust data gathering to effectively monitor, evaluate, and identify supply and demand of teachers, principals, and educators in shortage areas (e.g., mathematics, science, special education and English a second language). Points were withheld because Georgia does not have a system in place, but recognition is given for the state being in process of developing such a system.

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

In their presentation, in response to a specific question about strategies for principal preparation and development, Georgia provided very little explanation for how they plan to do this. They mentioned the use of a summer leadership academy but said very little about what this Academy would offer to prospective or

existing principals, or what knowledge and skills principals/trainees would gain through their participation in the Academy. As a result, assigned points were reduced.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>41</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	0	0	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems <sup>1</sup>	5	10	10	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to Inform key decisions	28	21	21	

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(D)(2)(i) Georgia presents a clear and noteworthy description of the accountability measures that teachers, school leaders, school districts, educator preparation programs, and the State are responsible for. However, Georgia does not establish clear approaches to measuring student growth in a manner consistent with the definition of student growth in the Race to the Top Federal Notice. They also do not discuss how growth is measured for individual students. Instead, Georgia presented information that was inconsistent with what was asked for in this criterion, and no clear description of student growth was found anywhere else in Georgia's application. As a result, all points were withheld. (D)(2)(ii) Georgia mentions its CLASS Keys evaluation system as a means to evaluate teachers and principals across multiple categories, but it does not present this information in the form of a high quality plan for teacher and principal evaluation. Instead, Georgia also suggests that the use of this tool is optional, when it states for example, that "in the case of teachers, inputs could be classroom observations). Additional metrics for teacher and principal evaluation are not clearly tied to an "evaluation plan." Georgia does, however, present a table that clearly defines how the evaluation of teachers, principals, school districts, teacher preparation programs, and principal preparation programs will be measured, and how criteria for each evaluation will be weighted. The chart is an outstanding presentation of metrics of a performance evaluation. However, points are being withheld because Georgia did not clearly articulate how its evaluation system works. (D)(2)(iii) Through Georgia's MOU, it establishes a clear approach for how LEAs should conduct teacher and principal annual evaluations. They require that face-to-face evaluation be conducted that use the evaluation system presented in the chart in (D)(2)(ii), that feedback provided during evaluations be timely and constructive, and that relevant data from summative and formative assessments be shared with principals and teachers. (D)(2)(iv) Georgia's Plan requires participating LEAs to use its Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM) and Leadership Effectiveness Measure (LEM) to manage the talent in their districts and schools. Specifically, participating LEAs will ensure targeted professional development opportunities are available to teachers and principals and that teachers and principals are aware of the professional development options available to them. LEAs also will tie pay increases to teachers and principals' performance on the TEM and LEM and work with the state to establish career growth opportunities and performance bonus structures. A key element of Georgia's plan, teachers can choose to individually opt out of the new compensation plan. However, those who opt in to the plan could earn considerably more in salary and bonus in the new plan. Teachers could earn a bonus worth 38% to 54% of their salary. Georgia has put a lot of thought into its teacher compensation plans, as evidenced by the new salary tables that the State planned to submit to the Georgia legislature in January 2010. Georgia's talent management plans strategies are consistent with some of the most effective and profitable private sector businesses in the country. In addition, Participating LEAs will use the TEM/LEM to make decisions about renewing teacher and principal contracts and to support, coach, and remove ineffective teachers and principals from schools.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15	15	

(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8	
--	----	---	---	--

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(D)(3)(i)(ii) Georgia is truly integrating its TEM and LEM processes into the key decisions it makes with regard to personnel development, retention, promotion, compensation, transfer, and recognition. Georgia plans to use its TEM/LEM scores to strategically place highly effective teachers and principals in high-poverty/high-minority schools and hard-to-staff/specialty subjects, thus ensuring the equitable and necessary distribution of its most talented teachers and leaders. Georgia also plans to use its effectiveness measures for teacher and school leader preparation programs to place equitable place highly effective teachers in the these schools. Georgia states its intentions for using TEM/LEM to place teachers and schools leaders in the following statement in its application, "Georgia will target its efforts toward placing the right teachers – the most effective – in the right places, teaching the right subjects to the most needy students; and placing the right principals – the most effective – in the highest need schools to create conditions for change for teachers and students." To bolster the ability of their placement plans to succeed, Georgia presents solid and achievable plans to retain, add, and develop effective teachers and principals for its high-poverty/high-minority schools and hard-to-staff/specialty subjects. Georgia indicates that the center-piece of its strategies will be the use of performance based compensation tied to student growth and tax-exempt signing bonuses for teachers and principals employed to increase and sustain high levels of achievement in these schools. Georgia also plans to work with LEAs to ensure targeted professional development tailored to the needs of principals, teachers, and students is provided to faculty and staff in these schools, particularly in the area of STEM; and intends to work with higher education and groups such as Teach for America, The New Teacher Project, and UTeach to recruit effective teachers and principals. Georgia presents other well thought out initiatives, along with a definitive timeline for implementing and executing their ambitions, that equate to a very robust, effective, and comprehensive plan for ensuring highly effective teachers and principals are equitably placed in high poverty/high minority schools. However, because very little information was presented about how it will ensure that highly effective teachers are available to STEM fields, including strategies to ensure these individuals are knowledgeable, innovative, and current in advancements in STEM, some points are being withheld.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	14	11	
--	----	----	----	---

**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(D)(4)(i) (ii) Throughout its application, Georgia presented clear plans and strategies for how it will use its TEM/LEM evaluation rubrics and student/teacher data systems to link student growth and achievement to teachers and principals. Georgia also plans to promote and provide models to teacher preparation programs that enhance their ability to teach prospective teachers how to analyze and use student performance data, including assessments, to differentiate instruction in the classroom. To assist teacher and principal preparation programs with monitoring the impact of their graduate on K-12 students, Georgia will use its data system to track the impact of graduates on student achievement and will publicly report the data for each institution and program preparing teachers and principals. Georgia plans to combine these efforts with partnerships it will establish with LEAs to assist them with providing experienced and effective mentors to teacher/principal candidates and assess the ability of teacher/principal candidates to produce student learning and create/manage effective learning environments in schools. Georgia presents a clear and rational implementation timeline for rolling out its initiatives. The efforts Georgia has presented are consistent with the strategies and tools they've proposed throughout its application, and are consistent with the expectations outlined in the Race to the Top Federal Notice. As a result, no points have been withheld.

**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

In their presentations, Georgia didn't share enough detail about how their principal preparation programs would build the capacity and develop the skills of principals to lead effective or low performing schools. They did a good job of explaining how programs would be measured but not how participants in

these programs would be developed or benefit from their enrollment. As a result, assigned points were reduced.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	20	17	17	
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(D)(5) Throughout its application, Georgia has presented clear, concise, and consistent ways it works with and supports its LEAs to provide great teachers and leaders for its schools. To summarize and clarify and its plans to provide effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning and collaboration time for teachers and principals, and to demonstrate how its participating LEAs will measure, evaluate, and improve the effectiveness of these supports to produce student achievement, Georgia provided a matrix that clearly delineates the roles and activities of the State and LEAs. Georgia also summarizes how it plans to use its Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM), Leadership Effectiveness Measure (LEM), District Effectiveness Measure (DEM), Teacher Preparation Program Effectiveness Measure (TPPEM), and Leadership Preparation Program Effectiveness Measure (LPPEM) to ensure candidate and prospective teachers, principals, and administrators have the developmental plans, tools, training, and support they need to succeed professionally and positively impact student learning. Georgia's strategies tie together, are comprehensive, and structured to have a significantly positive impact on schools, educators, and student learning in its participating LEAs. However, more could have been mentioned about the role LEAs, teachers and principals played (or will play) in constructing effective supports for their peers. As a result, some points have been withheld.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	138	113	107	

**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(E)(1) Georgia has a very comprehensive law that enables the State to intervene directly in persistently low achieving schools and in LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action status. School level interventions in Georgia may include school closure, mandated charter school, complete reconstitution, site-based expenditure controls, and/or mandated class size levels. LEA interventions may include decreased management authority for the superintendent or school board, assignment of a management team to run all or part of the LEA, and/or restructuring of the LEA's governance arrangement. Georgia is also one of six states given flexibility by the U.S. Department of Education, through the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), to use federal dollars to intervene in low performing schools and concentrate additional resources and interventions on such schools. In its application, Georgia explains its state-based tiered system for classifying low performing schools. Georgia is receiving full points because of the comprehensive and broad nature of its intervention policies.</p>				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	35	38	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	33	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

(E)(2)(i) Using its Differentiated Accountability Plan (DAP) strategies and other filters – schools in bottom 5% of schools on the State's ESEA assessment in reading and English/Language Arts and schools with graduate rates below 60%, Georgia has identified 62 schools [30 Title I, 12 non-Title I, and an additional 20 schools that rate NI-5 (Needs Improvement) or higher on Georgia's DAP Index] as persistently low achieving schools. Georgia provides a visual depiction of its strategy for identifying qualifying schools in its Appendix and a clear and concise explanation of its approach in the body of the application. Additionally, Georgia will require its LEAs that have the lowest achieving schools to engage in a system-wide analysis of student achievement where LEAs segment their student populations to identify problem areas, root causes, and implement multiple strategies to improve the achievement of students. Georgia states that by identifying feeder schools, the number of "identified" schools will increase from 62 to 126, but then states that it will not ask for additional dollars to RTS support these schools. There is nothing in RTTT that prohibits Georgia from requesting support for a feeder school strategy, if indeed, it has identified – as the applicant claims – that student achievement challenges begin at the elementary level. Presently, only two of the 62 schools Georgia has identified have elementary grade levels. It's noble for Georgia to point to existing (state or district) funds that could be used to invest in feeder school strategies but RTTT dollars are dedicated for this purpose – to identify problem areas and solutions, fix the problems, and get it right and keep it right. By limiting its request and looking to use (federal, state or local) dollars that may or may not be there over the life of the RTTT grant to serve the other 64 schools, Georgia could be undermining the potential success of its interventions. (E)(2)(ii) As part of its DAP Plan, Georgia identifies schools in need of improvement on a scale of NI-1 to NI-10. NI-5 and higher schools are given State-Directed Status and are assigned a State Director who works closely with the identified school, observes and provides professional development for teachers, principals, administrators, and ensures the school is executing its improvement plan(s). Using its system, Georgia has significantly reduced its number of NI schools from 20% of all Georgia schools in 2004 to 13% of schools in 2009. Besides State Directors and the ability to take over, reconstitute or turn schools into charters, Georgia's existing plan for supporting its LEAs with turning around its lowest performing schools includes assisting them with systematic use of data, establishing clear performance expectations for schools, providing a process for implementing short-term action plans, dedicating performance coaches to schools, operating learning and leadership academics for teachers and principals, and ensuring effective communications with its LEA leadership and staff. In the future, Georgia Department of Education plans to establish a "State Office of School Turnaround (SOST)" and separate the function of school turnaround from the regular school improvement process. Georgia's State Superintendent, in her letter to the U.S. Secretary of Education, stressed that turning around chronically underperforming schools is a more intense function than traditional school improvement. The SOST will be responsible for turning around schools. To bolster its efforts, Georgia plans to expand its partnership with Teach For America (TFA) to increase its presence and support in urban districts and The New Teacher Project to do the same in rural communities in Georgia. The State also plans to invite Educational Management Organizations (EMOs) and Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) that are prequalified and selected by the State, to manage turnaround schools. Georgia uses all four forms of RTTT school interventions. Georgia lists a number of other programmatic initiatives that align neatly with their turnaround efforts and provide a clear action plan, complete with timelines, for engaging in this work. The strategies and interventions Georgia has outlined will serve as a good road map for strengthening other schools – low performing or not – in the future; it's a good plan. As a result, Georgia is receiving high points. Georgia would have received the full points for this section if it had expressed more explicit plans and strategies, anywhere in the application, for collaborating with and building the capacity of LEAs to quickly and effectively intervene in schools that are struggling, or show signs of struggling. For Georgia's reform strategies to take root and yield long-term success among schools and students, the State cannot be the sole or primary intervener in the future; this should and would be accomplished more effectively and cost efficiently at the District level with the State providing support, resources, and accountability for results.

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

During their presentation, Georgia further explained their efforts to improve their low performing schools. They expressed more explicit plans and strategies for intervening in their low performing schools and providing support. They shared that State Directors would be assigned to individual Districts and Schools to ensure specific interventions and supports are provided and implemented to boost student achievement. A combination of expert consultants, school-based turn around plans, professional development for teachers

and principals, potential replacement of staff, and state provided instructional tools would used by schools and districts to address achievement concerns. Additionally, Georgia's State Education Agency will require school districts that have low performing schools to submit to budget and resource allocation reviews to ensure that funds and resources are being adequately invested in target schools and schools within their feeder chain.

Total	50	45	48	
-------	----	----	----	--

**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	10	10	

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(F)(1)(i) The State's contribution to education increased from 58.2% of total state appropriations in FY2008 compared to 62.5% in FY2009. An expenditure chart demonstrates the level of appropriation to state agencies serving elementary, primary, and higher education, in comparison to other state agencies, services and initiatives. The applicant received full points for this criterion. (F)(1)(ii)(a) Georgia's school funding formula provides a higher level of state funding to "less wealthy" LEAs than to wealthier districts. The state also provides an "Equalization" grant that subsidizes the costs of educating students in "less wealthy districts." Georgia reports that the amount of Equalization funding at the beginning of FY2010 was \$413M. In addition the Equalization grant, the State's Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) provides funding that is heavily weighted towards rural and poorer districts. In FY2010, \$11M was dedicated for this purpose. Georgia also established a bond program where, starting in FY2009, low-income districts can access a special bond to help cover the cost of school construction and renovation. In FY2010, \$10M was appropriated for this purpose. Georgia is receiving full points for this criterion. (F)(1)(ii)(b) Georgia's state law requires that schools failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two years in row must be provided technical assistance from the LEAs. LEAs are to ensure that schools complete a school improvement plan, which upon completion, qualifies the school to receive additional aid and resources to execute its plan. Georgia state law enables LEAs to direct additional state funding to persistently low achieving schools. In addition, remediation and early intervention program funds supplement the funding schools receive for students at risk. In FY2010, \$40M was appropriated by the state for its Remediation Fund and \$306M for its Early Intervention Program Fund. Georgia has made a significant commitment to supporting its lowest performing schools, and is deserving of full points for this criterion.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	38	38	
---	----	----	----	--

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(F)(2)(v) Georgia enables LEAs to start and operate charter schools and has established 12 Early College High Schools, which are also started and managed by school districts and serve 2,201 students in Georgia. Eighty-one percent of students enrolled in Early College schools are low income, 85% are minority and 85% would be the first in their family to attend college. Because of the limited scope of opportunities for school districts to operate innovate schools presented here, Georgia has presented for this criterion, points are being withheld.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	3	3	
---	---	---	---	--

**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(F)(3) Georgia presents several innovations. All of them create favorable conditions for reform and innovation. Specifically important to the sustainability and impact of education reforms in Georgia is the strength of local school boards. In 2008, Georgia moved to strengthen local boards by establishing the Commission on School Board Excellence, and involving business partners in the creation of the

Commissions, its policies, and programs. The Commission's recommendations were introduced as a bill that passed the State Senate but not Georgia's House of Representatives. Georgia said it planned to reintroduce the bill in January 2010. Should it pass, it will provide sweeping changes and improvements to school boards. Georgia recognized that school quality extends to school boards; boards enable school districts to create the conditions for high performing schools, effective teachers, and successful students. It's wise on the part of Georgia to include this priority in their reform goals.

Total	55	51	51	
-------	----	----	----	--

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

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

**Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Georgia presents a thorough plan for enhancing STEM education in the State. Georgia has increased the rigor of its math and science standards, enhanced math and science requirements for graduation, and introduced differentiated pay for math and science teachers and for early childhood teachers with a math/science "endorsement". Georgia also introduced science mentors for teachers in schools and partnerships between K-12 and higher education.

Total	15	15	15	
-------	----	----	----	--

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Georgia's application comprehensively and coherently addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in ARRA and the State Success Factors Criteria. Georgia has a very aggressive reform plan, and was able to get school districts that educate half of the students in Georgia to participate. Should Georgia and participating LEAs succeed with implementing and executing their RTTT reform agenda, the State will significantly increase its potential to encourage (or require) other LEAs to participate in the future.

Total		0	0	
-------	--	---	---	--

Grand Total	500	440	437	
-------------	-----	-----	-----	--



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Georgia Application #2160GA-2



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>46</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35	35	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	4	6	
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>i -Georgia has offered a comprehensive, coherent reform agenda in its proposal, and has created positive conditions for reform, including an aligned strategic plan and facilitating innovation and building partnerships; setting high standards and rigorous assessment and preparing students for college; creating data systems to support instruction; offering professional development and support; and strategies for turning around lowest-achieving schools. ii- The state's reform plan has engaged a relatively small proportion of the state's LEAs as participating LEAs. 23 LEAs (or 12.7% of all LEAs) have shown strong commitment to the plan and have entered into binding MOUs with the state. The 13 participating LEAs that have lowest-achieving schools are signing onto implement all portions of the States RTTT plans, and the other 10 LEAs are signing onto the plan in the reform areas of Standards and Assessments, Data Systems to Support Instructions and Great Teachers and Leaders. All 23 LEAs have been signed by their superintendent and president of the local school. The signature of the local teachers' union leader is not applicable, since Georgia is a right-to-work state. iii - The participating LEAs will translate into moderate levels of broad statewide impact, involving less than half the state's schools, students and teachers. The 23 LEAs involve a total of 871 schools (38.4% of all GA schools) and 659,000 students, of whom over 414,000 are students in poverty (46% of the state total), and 46,000 teachers (40% of all teachers). The 23 LEAs account for 34 lowest-achieving schools (55% of all lowest achieving GA schools.) The proposal did not describe why or how these LEAs were selected, nor discuss how participation of these particular LEAs might yield valuable information about broader statewide efforts and strategies. The proposal presents goals for increasing student achievement with and without RTTT, with targeted increases in test scores for language arts and math, for example, being between 3 and 8 percentage points. Similarly, they present targeted goals for reducing achievement gaps between subgroups, increasing high school graduate rates, and increasing college enrollment and persistence, that appear ambitious yet achievable.</p> <p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b></p> <p>The panel described some of the advantages of working solely with only the 23 LEAs, allowing it will enable them to work with a smaller group of districts that are firmly committed to elements of the RTTT plan. They stated that work with this smaller group, focusing on systems as the "unit of analysis", would allow them to work productively. As far as addressing state-wide scalability of these efforts, they stated that the anticipated positive results should "speak for themselves", encouraging other districts to join in these efforts in future years.</p>				
<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	

(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	17	17	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	7	
<b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Georgia has put together a good plan that demonstrates its capacity to implement, scale up, &amp; sustain proposed plans. The proposal contains clear definition of teams that would manage and implement each of the four reform areas. They recognize the importance of "complete vertical alignment", spanning from the State, to LEAS, School leaders, and teachers, in order to effect successful school improvement, and have provided work plans that reflect this systemic approach. The proposal also contains information on how they plan to optimize a variety of financial sources (e.g., RTTT, other federal, state, local and private) to accomplish their goals. The proposal does not discuss how they plan to work closely with staff and teachers at the LEA and school building level, in order to build capacity and infrastructure at the local level, in way that will enhance the sustainability of these reform efforts. The proposal demonstrates broad stakeholder support. To their credit, they issued an educator and stakeholder survey in November 2009, as part of the application process, and received responses from over 20,000 educators, 15,000 of whom were teachers (over 13% of the overall teacher population in Georgia.) The support from other critical stakeholders is evidenced by the provision of support letters, from numerous organizations, task forces, and major types of stakeholders.</p>				
<b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b>				
<p>There was not strong representation of state-wide buy-in by teachers, principals or superintendents in the presentation and Q&amp;A responses..</p>				
<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	22	22	
<b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Georgia satisfactorily demonstrates that it has made progress in each of the reform areas. For example, in the Standards and Assessment area, its curriculum has been recognized by the Fordham Institute as 5th in the country, and Georgia Governor Perdue is co-leading the work of the National Governors Association in the Common Core State Standards Initiative. Similarly, in the Data Systems area, it has already begun work on a longitudinal data system, including work through a National Student Clearinghouse Pilot funded by the Gates Foundation. II – Georgia has been showing promising evidence of increased student achievement (In grade K-8) through NAEP and/or state CRT test scores, across reading, language arts, math and science. It is also displaying decreased achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, particularly in the area of middle school mathematics for low income students. Decreased achievement gaps were also observed for race, particularly for Hispanic students. Positive gains are also being shown in increasing high school graduate rates. They attribute these positive gains to implementation of such initiatives as the new (and more rigorous) Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), local and regional STEM-focused initiatives, charter schools, and systematic use of data.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>97</b>	

**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	

(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	16	16	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Georgia is one of 51 states and territories participating in the Common Core State Standards Initiative, with Governor Perdue co-chairing the CCSI for the National Governors Association. Georgia is also one of four states selected by the national PTA to lead a campaign for a common, rigorous set of standards. Georgia appears well positioned to successfully meet its schedule of adopting common standards by August 2010. This is due to its involvement in the early review of the core standards, the establishment of a streamlined process for adoption in place, the reasonably small gap between the common core and current GPS, and its articulation of key steps in their implementation process provided in the proposal. The plan does not offer much discussion regarding the standards implementation process, and how it anticipates addressing the challenges of aligning current and future standards, and development of curriculum materials and classroom resources.</p>				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Georgia has demonstrated its commitment to develop and implement common, high-quality assessments. Georgia is involved in the CCSO Balanced Assessment Consortium (36 states), as well as assessment consortia with Achieve (27 states), and one led by Florida. They are also planning to conduct a gap analysis between current assessment systems and requirements of new standards to strategically plan the best way to proceed with the assessment transition, and consider possible options of targeting areas of overlap, or build new items for assessment within current vendor contracts.</p>				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Georgia has laid out a detailed plan regarding how it will support schools and LEAs in their transition to enhance standards and high-quality assessments, including access to high-quality instructional materials; targeted professional development, a communications plan, methodology for ensuring fidelity of implementation, and alignment of existing criteria with college and work readiness. They plan to develop two additional resources for teachers: a formative assessment tool kit, and benchmark assessment (low stakes assessments given throughout the school year, concerning preparedness for the end of year exam.) The plan does not discuss particular efforts to build capacity at the local district and within LEAs so that individuals at the local level can provide educator support and training. They also propose important work forwarding proficiency-based advancement (with waivers from seat-based credit requirements), and a major policy change requiring that all elementary and middle schools make Science their second AYP indicator.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

Georgia currently has in place 10 of the 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act. The two elements currently in process are information on students not tested, by grade and subject, and data that addresses alignment and preparation for success in postsecondary education.				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Georgia has outlined a clear data governance structure defining organizational roles and responsibilities for its data management system, derived from a comprehensive process with multiple stakeholders during the RTTT proposal process. Agency heads also signed a joint MOU outlining how the SLDS will be governed and accessed. The plan includes the development of a research agenda based on its five goals, and plans to reach out to researchers around the state and nation to promote other research.				
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Georgia presents a good plan to increase use of local instructional improvement systems through providing access, technological tools and training, professional developments, and Instructional Improvement Reports (IIR). The State, however, largely "encourages" increased adoption and use of local instructional improvement systems. They will also require educators seeking certification or recertification to receive training in the analysis and use of data. The primary focus appears to be on teachers, with relatively little discussion about specific initiatives supporting principals and administrators. The state will also encourage strategic partnerships with universities and researchers to conduct "a purposeful research agenda to inform decision-making and improve student performance." A detailed schedule, set of tasks and activities, teams responsible, and performance measure targets are provided, with the goal that 50% of teachers in high needs schools, 50% of math and science teachers, and 50% of principals in participating LEAS will access new IIR by end of SY 2013-14.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>	

**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Georgia has the legal, statutory or regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals. GATAPP (Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy) programs for teachers meet all five elements of alternative routes to certification as defined in the Notice. An alternative route for school leaders called a Permit, also satisfies all five elements. All alternative routes receive the same level of scrutiny as traditional preparation programs. ii -The State has a fairly sizeable number of alternative routes to certification that are now in use, which have yielded significant numbers of new teachers. There are now five distinct paths under GaTAPP to Clear Renewable (CR) Certification, three of which were recently approved. Across the different paths, there are now 27 approved programs. Full GATAPP programs produced 837 successful completers with CR certification. Of the 11,170 newly hired teachers in 2008-09, GaTAPP programs provided roughly 22% of new hires, while GA-based college/university programs provided 28%. Due to infrequent request of the Permit route for school leaders, Georgia is proposing a new alternative route within this proposal, to mirror alternative routes for teachers. There was generally little discussion about supporting the training of effective principals. iii - Georgia currently has sufficient data to identify large-scale critical shortage subjects and staffing, pertaining to mathematics, science, special education, and regional shortages in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages.) The state plans to use some current work to allow them to track teacher candidates earlier in				

their career, and track their progression into the workforce. There was little discussion about addressing issues of principal shortage.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>45</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	2	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	10	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	9	9	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	28	24	

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

I – Georgia has a sound plan for embarking on the development of system-wide approach to effectiveness and accountability, which at its core has measurements of student achievement and student growth. Georgia is planning to create a single Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM) for each teacher, and a similarly single measure for each school building leader (LEM), and district (DEM). These will feed back into a Teacher Preparation Program Effectiveness Measure (TPPEM) and a Leadership Preparation Program Effectiveness Measure (LPPEM) to improve educator preparation programs. The system recognizes that accountability must be accompanied by appropriate levels of support. They plan to develop a Value-Added Model (VAM) utilizing statistical techniques which "uses multiple years of students' test score data to estimate the effects of individual schools or teachers on student learning." The proposal did not fully discuss how they were defining student growth. II . The proposed system has a well-differentiated and fair system for evaluating teachers and principals. The TEM and LEM system will have 4 components: a) qualitative, rubric-based evaluation tools; b) a value-added score; c) reduction of the student achievement gap at classroom, and school levels; and d) other quantitative measures, such as teacher, student, parent and principal surveys. Systems will be designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement, through RT3 working groups. III A good description of how the state will conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals is provided. It will build and improve upon the annual evaluations of teachers and principals that are already mandatory in Georgia. Part of this effort will involve investing in building State training capacity, and for disseminating to LEAS value-added reports. IV – The plan clearly lays out how these evaluations will be used to inform key talent development and talent measure decisions. MOUs with participating LEAS will require LEAS to commit to using TEM/LEM information to inform staff management decisions regarding such areas as professional development, compensation, promotion, and dismissals. Additional individual bonuses will be available to core teachers in high-need schools if they reduce the student achievement gap. "Current teachers who choose not to opt in will be grandfathered into their current salary structure while new teachers will automatically be placed in the new compensation system." The proposal provides information as to how the new proposed performance based compensation will afford higher earning potential for prospective teachers., and how LEAs will use TEM/LEM scores to ensure equitable access to highly effective teachers and leaders by high poverty or high minority schools. A detailed action plan for implementing these reforms is provided.

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The panel presentation and Q&A did not sufficiently describe student growth measure. Quantitative measures were not well-defined nor addressed sufficiently, particularly the foci of the measures, other than the range of techniques that would be used (e.g., student, parent and teacher surveys).

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15	15	

(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6	6	
<b>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
I and ii (combined)– Georgia has provided a clear, strategic plan to address equitable distribution of effective teachers & principals. It proposes a plan utilizing four strategies: a) retain effective teachers and principals already working in high needs schools and specialty areas; b) encourage effective teachers and principals to move to high needs schools and specialty areas; c) grow the pipeline of effective teachers and principals entering the profession and d) use targeted professional development to improve capacity of existing teachers and principals. The applicant did not fully discuss how they specifically plan to address equitable distribution of hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas. Georgia recognizes that different strategies must be used to address teacher shortages in the rural parts of the state (which has only a 50% graduate rate, and is the third lowest among all states for rural students), and proposes a Grow your Own Teacher competitive grant program for rural districts. A detailed action plan for implementing these various strategies is provided.				
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	10	10	
<b>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
I and ii: The applicant has laid out a good plan for improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs in the state. As a result of ongoing RT3 discussion, the University System of Georgia and the PSC have signed letters stating their support for a comprehensive and bold set of key core principles that signal a clear shift away from many traditional credentialing programs. Based on the core principle that the mission of preparation programs must be to produce better outcomes for students, other guiding principles involve that programs must: a) provide systematic and diverse clinical experiences integrated with classroom theory; b) prepare them to use data to differentiate instruction and boost student learning; c) track and evaluate student achievement impact of their graduates to identify and strengthen preparation practices; d) create robust partnerships with LEAs; and e) conduct legitimate examination of candidates' ability to produce student learning before they are permitted to graduate. It also asserts that they consider the link between Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators results and student achievement, and revise licensing requirements as appropriate. There was generally little discussion specifically addressing principal preparation.				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	12	12	
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
I and II (combined): The proposal summarized a wide variety of support they would be providing schools. Amongst some of the cross-cutting initiatives was a partnership with Georgia Tech's outreach center to provide focused professional development for teachers in math and science, and Summer Leadership Academies. While the proposal provided brief descriptions of these programs, it was somewhat difficult to discern how much, and in what ways, professional development would be on-going and job-embedded, nor how those efforts would be measured and improved. There was a heavy emphasis on supporting teachers, rather than offering comparable attention to providing effective support to principals.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>103</b>	

**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	

<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
Georgia is in a good position to directly assist persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAS. Current Georgia law allows the State to intervene to assist persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs. They also were among six states chosen by the US ED to pilot a Differentiated Accountability Pilot, which creates tiers of interventions best suited to the needs of schools.				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	30	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
Georgia has a clear method for identifying persistently lowest-achieving schools (LAS; bottom 5% of schools using ESEA tests in Math and ELA, and whether a high school had a graduate rate of < 60%.) In addition, they have taken an aggressive, pro-active approach and have added back in 20 schools that fell into the NI-5 or higher category, and wishing to identify feeder schools, those elementary schools that are sending students to middle schools and high schools, where given the larger sample sizes, are finally identified as LAS schools. (While this increases the number of schools of highest concern from 63 to 126, the state will not be asking for additional money for feeder schools from RTTT.) Georgia offers a thoughtful, comprehensive plan for turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools, based on past successes and lessons learned from previous reform efforts, such as systematic use of data, establishing clear performance expectations of schools, short-term action plans, performance coaches, data driven professional learning and leadership academies. They plan to establish a new office – the State Office of School Turnaround within the GADOE to lead this effort to support persistently lowest-achieving schools, and plan to use a variety of structural and programmatic initiatives to turn around its LAS. The proposal includes a detailed action plan for these proposed efforts.				
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b>				
The panelist did not sufficiently clarify what was entailed by several strategies (e.g., intensive diagnostics, tool kits) proposed for turning around lowest achieving schools.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>45</b>	

**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The Georgia state budget reflects the high priority it places on education. Its state appropriated allocation to education increased from 58% to 60.4% of total expenditures from FY08 to FY09, despite the state revenue decreasing by 9%. Its state policies lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAS and other LEAs, and between high-poverty schools and other schools.				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
Georgia has a number of conditions in place that are supportive of encouraging high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools. Georgia's charter school laws has no caps on the number of charter schools that can be authorized or on the number of students charters can enroll. The National Alliance of				

Public Charter Schools ranked Georgia fourth in terms of charter laws and commitment to charter quality. There are 7 types of charter schools in Georgia, and there are currently 121 approved charter schools. ii – Georgia has clear laws and regulations regarding how charters schools are authorized approved, and closed, where student achievement plays a significant factor. It also stipulates that charter schools must reach students representative of the racial and SES diversity in the school system, and provides positive demographic enrollment data to support that claim. iii – Georgia charter schools are entitled to equitable funding levels compared to traditional public schools. Unlike in many states, they are entitled to state federal and local revenue, and funding does not rely on special appropriations, but rather, is built in the funding formula generally applicable to all public schools. iv – The state provides charter schools with funding for facilities and assistance with facilities acquisition. Each local board of education must make its unused facilities available to local charter schools, and may not charge rent for the facility normally used by a public school. v – The State enables LEAS to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools. This application cites only one form of innovative schools, that of Early Colleges (partnerships between the local systems and a USG institution), which allow students to receive both secondary and post-secondary credit for the same courses.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	4	4	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
Georgia demonstrates other significant reform conditions, including efforts to pass legislation that would strengthen school system governance models, and heighten requirements concerning board membership, capacity, and accountability. Other reform efforts includes the Investing in Educational Excellence legislation passed in 2008 to grant increased flexibility to LEAS in return for increased accountability, and redesigning of preparation programs for school leaders and teachers.				
<b>Total</b>	55	53	53	

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
Georgia outlines a comprehensive plan with a major emphasis on STEM. Three major goals are outlined which cross the four major reform areas, that include a rigorous course of study in STEM, cooperation with STEM-capable partners, and preparing more students for advanced careers in STEM. Of note, they wish to enact a major policy change requiring that all elementary and middle schools make Science their second AYP indicator. They also describe a Math+Science=Success initiative, which is an awareness and communications campaign especially targeting under represented groups, to increase awareness of and interest in STEM studies.				
<b>Total</b>	15	15	15	

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

Georgia has offered a bold, comprehensive approach to education reform, that address all four major areas outlined in the Notice. They recognize the importance of "complete vertical alignments", spanning from the State, to LEAs, school leaders and teachers, in order to effect successful school improvement, and the proposal demonstrates broad stakeholder support, including drawing upon a survey they conducted involving 20,000 educators as part of the RTTT proposal process. They have laid out clear, comprehensive plans addressing supporting schools and LEAS in their transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments, increasing use of local instructional improvement systems, developing and supporting highly effective teachers and leaders, and turning around lowest-achieving schools.

Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	431	414	



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2



**Georgia Application #2160GA-3**

**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	34	34	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	7	7	
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The State has a clearly articulated comprehensive and coherent reform agenda nicely linked to the four required education areas. LEA involvement indicates that 23 out of 181 school districts have signed MOUs. Yet, these districts represent 38.4% of state schools, 40.5 % of state students, and 45.5% of students in poverty. Since these 23 districts represent a large number of students in poverty, the potential impact is significant. The MOU is very comprehensive and has clear and detailed expectations. LEA commitment to the MOU is very strong. There is no indication of local or statewide teacher support. Given the small number of participating LEAs, making statewide impact will be challenging.</p>				
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b></p> <p>The state presentation provided a reasonable explanation of how 23 LEAs can lead the way towards school reform in Georgia. Committed and successful early adopters can model and persuade following school districts to eventually join their reform journey. Having the ability to sit around the table with 23 rather than 181 school districts will increase the likelihood of successful implementation and fidelity to change initiatives.</p>				
<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	10	10	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	2	2	
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The state appears to have the capacity and infrastructure to implement its school reform agenda. Statewide management, data, and budgetary systems are in place. Management appears to be fairly traditional and top down. Evidence of teacher and principal involvement is not compelling. Only 13% of teachers responded to a statewide survey. Coupled with the light involvement of LEAs, its questionable whether or not there is sufficient teacher and principal buy in and commitment. Rather than backward mapping from the classroom, policy appears to originate at the state level. Although supported by the superintendents of the state's two largest school districts, there are no letters of support from teacher or administrator professional associations. There appears to be strong support from higher education and the business community.</p>				

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	25	25	
<b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>There is clear progress in 3 of the 4 reform areas: standards and assessments; data systems; and turning around schools. Teacher development is emerging and principal development appears to be following, but it does not appear to be robust. Teacher and principal involvement and leadership in their own development seems to be lacking. The state has made steady progress in its NEAP and state developed tests. There is a positive trend, if not statistically significant, in closing the achievement gap between all sub groups except for disabled students. The high school graduation rate has consistently improved.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>87</b>	

**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Georgia is a clear leader in the standards area. Its governor co chairs the Common Core Standards (CCSs) initiative for the National Governors Association. The state's plans are on track to adopt the CCSs by July of 2010. The state will build on its strengths and experience gained through the development of its already well-developed and acclaimed Georgia Proficiency Standards.</p>				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Georgia is to be complimented for signing preliminary MOUs with 3 major consortia groups; Balanced Assessment (36 states); Achieve (27 states); and with Florida. Once its CCSs are rolled out, the state will do a gap analysis and make adjustments to ensure alignment with the new standards.</p>				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The state has a detailed and high quality plan to transition to CCSs and aligned assessments. It will build on its strengths and previous work implementing the Georgia Proficiency Standards and refine and align its assessments as needed. The state should also be complimented for its plans to develop a formative assessment toolkit and bench marked assessments for classroom teachers.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>	

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully Implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	20	20	
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Georgia appears to be a leader in fully implementing 10/12 of the America Competes Act elements in its SLDS.				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	5	5	5	
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The state has a high quality SLDS developed and used in collaboration with a broad coalition of agency heads. There is a clear plan to make it accessible to constituents.				
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	18	13	13	
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The state has strong commitment and plans in place for using data to improve instruction. Plans at the local level appear to be quite variant in terms of having and/or using data based instructional improvement systems. Improvement plans in this area appear to be more at the awareness rather than implementation stage. The state supports making data accessible to researchers.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	

**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	21	13	13	
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The state provides alternative pathways for aspiring teachers through LEAs and Regional Educational Service Agencies. They provide programs for teachers independent of Institutes of Higher Education. There are 5 distinct pathways with 27 approved programs and 834 successful completers, which represent 22% of new hires in the state. There is one alternative pathway for school superintendents and principals called Permit and it is rarely used. Alternative pathways similar to the teacher pathways are currently being developed for school leaders. The state uses proxy measures to monitor areas of large-scale critical shortages in subject and staffing areas. Eventually this information will be further refined and linked to Institutes of Higher Education so that preparation programs can monitor and adjust their offerings. High-quality pathways for principals need to be considered and developed.				
<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	58	57	57	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	28	28	

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state is to be commended for developing and piloting new research based evaluation instruments for teachers and leaders. Georgia is also participating in the Gates Foundation Teacher Student Data Link initiative. The instruments Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM), Leader Effectiveness Measure (LEM), and the District Effectiveness Measure (DEM) will also be linked to preparation programs. A provider will be hired to help the state develop a value added model. A typical TEM focuses on a scoring rubric that could include principal and/or peer observations of teaching, value added scores for teachers in core areas that are tested, achievement gap reduction information, and various surveys focusing on climate, student feedback, parental satisfaction, etc. The application discusses a value added model, but does not explicitly define student growth. Annual evaluations are presently required, but will be more consistent and rigorous in the future. Teacher effectiveness measures are weighted and placed on a career ladder so that differentiated pay at significantly higher levels is possible. This plan will be implemented with the participating LEAs, but will also be expanded to 60 additional districts each year. This is a robust and exciting plan with a great deal of potential to make a difference in schools.

**(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals**

25

19

19

(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools

15

12

12

(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas

10

7

7

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Georgia has an ambitious yet achievable plan to encourage the equitable distribution of teachers in high poverty and /or high minority schools and to equitably staff high needs subjects and specialty areas. The plan is based on incentives ranging from additional compensation and signing bonuses to targeted professional development and partnerships with external organizations such as Teach for America, the New Teacher Project, U Teach, and grow your own programs with LEAs. Although less developed, plans for the equitable distribution for principals are emerging and include enhancing summer academies, increasing the number of alternative pathways (there is only one), allowing qualified non-educators into the principalship, and dropping the Masters Degree requirement.

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

14

7

7

**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state plans to link student growth and achievement data to teachers and principals and then link it to their actual preparation programs. Preparation programs will be evaluated and publicized based upon the success of their graduates. The state also plans to expand certification options. A guiding principle for teacher and leadership preparation programs will be to prepare teachers and leaders to use data to differentiate instruction and boost students learning. The state will expand successful programs and tie funding to program effectiveness. There is no discussion or linkage to national standards for leadership preparation. Furthermore, there is little discussion of the curriculum, practicum/internships, or mentorships for prospective and practicing school principals.

**(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals**

20

10

10

**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Professional development is centered around implementing the Common Core Standards & aligned assessments, the use of data to improve student learning, and turning around low achieving schools.

Summer academies for school leaders are not explained in any depth. The curriculum for k-12 students is standards based, but teacher and leader professional development are not.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>106</b>	

**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The state clearly has the legal authority to intervene in its persistently lowest achieving schools and school districts and feels obliged to identify and work with its low achieving schools. These schools are identified in a tiered system and receive support according to their particular needs.				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Georgia has done a nice job of identifying and working with its persistently lowest achieving schools (LAS) Currently Georgia has identified 62 persistently low achieving schools. 24 are high schools, 36 are middle schools, and 2 are elementary schools. The state has taken a systems approach in that it has also identified feeder schools in the system that have also contributed to low performance, thus in effect raising the number of LAS to 126. The state has a positive historic performance of improving low achieving schools. The number of schools in the needs improvement category dropped between 2003 and 2008-09 from 533 schools to 33 schools. Yet, there are still challenges with 12% of schools in needs improvement status and still over 30 persistently low achieving schools. Partnerships with outside organization like Teach for America and charter management organizations are being explored and cultivated. Furthermore, there is a new state office, the Office of School Turnaround. The state has employed a number of strategies in working with these schools including; different intervention models; extended day; math and graduation coaches, and life and learning Academies focused on improving middle school students chance for success in high school and beyond.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	

**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Education took a 9% or 2 billion dollar cut, yet the percentage of education expenditures for 2009 rose from 58.2% to 60.4%. The state has a grant equalization program used to subsidize less wealthy districts. It also leverages funds through its regional Educational Service Agencies. It is difficult to determine what these and other cited policies accomplish in terms of district per pupil expenditures.				

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	35	35	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The National Charter School Alliance views Georgia's charter school law as fourth best in the country. There are 121 charter schools in the Georgia, which represent 6% of the schools in the state. Significantly, there are no caps. There is a rigorous review process for for granting and denying charters, which includes student achievement and a variety of other Important criteria. Charters in Georgia receive equitable funding and significant help with the attainment of facilities. Georgia allows LEAs to operate 12 early colleges and are considered innovative and autonomous in that they operate in partnership with LEAs, business, and and colleges. Given these supportive conditions, one would expect to find an even greater number of charter schools.</p>				
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	3	3	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Georgia is to be commended for new performance based "governance team" standards for school for its school boards. Also of note is the Investing in Excellence opportunity for LEAs that allows them the freedom to negotiate performance based contracts. The discussion surrounding teacher and leadership program redesign was not well developed.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	55	45	45	

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>This appears to be a real strength for Georgia. The state has rigorous math and science standards, increasing graduation requirements, differentiated pay for math and science teachers, repayable loans and a host of other incentives to encourage and support teachers. STEM discussion and values are integrated throughout the application.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	15	15	15	

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Georgia's application comprehensively and coherently address the four education reform areas. LEA involvement could be wider but there is strong commitment from the districts involved and they represent a significant number of poor, minority and low achieving children within the state.</p>				
<b>Total</b>		0	0	
<b>Grand Total</b>	500	406	406	



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Georgia Application #2160GA-4



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	65	54	48	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	39	36	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10	8	
<b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(A)(1)(i) The state has articulated a cohesive set of attainable goals that will result in increased student performance across the board and a well-educated workforce of young adults. At the core of the initiatives is STEM, which is very evident throughout the goals. (A)(1)(ii) Only 23 LEAs, which represent only 12.7% of the state's LEAs, have entered into a binding MOU. However, all participating districts have agreed unanimously to support each of the RTTT Elements. (A)(1)(iii) Even though the participation rates reported in the previous section appear very low, these 23 LEAs represent 871 or 38% of all schools, 659,000 students, and 414,000 or 46% of students in poverty. Eliciting a higher percentage of participating schools with students in poverty would have strengthened the application.</p>				
<b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b>				
<p>(A)(ii) During the presentation, a rationale was presented for the low number of participating districts but: it was unclear whether the participating districts were representative of the state in terms of the major demographic categories and whether these districts were selected or relied on volunteers.</p> <p>(A)(iii) Specific plans for statewide rollout of RTTT participation were not sufficiently described during the presentation.</p>				
<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	30	30	30	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10	
<b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(A)(2)(i) Georgia's top state officials have embraced its RTTT plan as a state priority. A steering committee will make day-to-day decisions about the 4 RTTT reform areas with input from specialized Advisory Committees. (A)(2)(ii) Georgia followed a very "open" process in developing its RTTT proposal. Educators were surveyed, all of its RTTT information was posted on a public website and comments were elicited, analyzed, and acted upon. A Critical Feedback Team of Georgia's leaders reviewed its RTTT proposal, and support for the proposal was broad based.</p>				
<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	30	30	30	

(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	25	25	
<b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(A)(3)(i) Georgia has provided a wealth of information on the fact that they are making significant progress in each of the reform areas. Their initiatives are well-described and directly related to their goals in each reform area. (A)(3)(ii) Georgia has provided more-than-sufficient evidence to demonstrate a consistent upward trend in student achievement across assessments and all demographic groups. As their myriad plans are implemented through RTTT, their cohesive reform effort will lead to additional gains in student performance and state capacity.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>108</b>	

**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(B)(1)(i) Georgia is in full support of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, which is currently supported by 48 states. Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue co-chairs the joint initiative of the National Governors' Association, as well as the aforementioned Common Core Standards initiative, which is supported by 51 states and territories. (B)(1)(ii) Georgia's target date for adopting the Common Core State Standards is July 2010. The state now has in place a process to streamline the adoption of content standards. Through the aforementioned initiatives, in which Georgia is taking a strong role as a national leader in the newest standards and assessment movement, the state will be at the forefront of most recent education reforms.</p>				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(B)(2)(i) Georgia has signed preliminary MOUs with 3 consortia dedicated to developing common assessments, which is an efficient process for ensuring the development of cost-effective assessments that will benefit multiple states and provide a mechanism for direct comparisons of performance and promote the likelihood of additional joint initiatives. These consortia include the CCSSO Consortium of 36 states, the Achieve Consortium of 27 states, and the consortium led by Florida. (B)(2)(ii) The State described in detail its interest in participating in the aforementioned consortia to build common assessments.</p>				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(B)(3) Georgia is experienced in the implementation of new standards, having recently implemented the Georgia Performance Standards, and understands that appropriate instructional materials need to accompany the institution of enhanced standards and assessments. A very detailed timeline was presented. The initiative in Georgia to move away from the awarding of credits through "seat time" will provide students the opportunity to advance based on proficiency. Both high- and low-performing students will benefit greatly</p>				

from this Move on When Ready approach. Sufficient documentation was provided to support the text above. Georgia is committed to moving to online assessment and providing the State's educators with an online bank of items to use for formative assessment. All of these initiatives will build capacity for excellence in the state.

Total	70	70	70	
-------	----	----	----	--

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully Implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	24	24	

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(C)(1) According to the 2009 Data Quality Campaign survey of states regarding states' progress for implementing its 10 Essential Elements of a longitudinal data system, Georgia was one of eleven states with all ten elements implemented, as they stated in their application. Additionally, Georgia contracts with the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Student Tracker Service to ensure that the State has access to accurate and timely data. As a result of subsequent analyses, Georgia learned that approximately two-thirds of its high school graduates between 2000 and 2008 enrolled in a postsecondary institution somewhere in the U.S. Georgia should be commended for being the first state to study and publish such information. Georgia is participating in an NSC study to track high school students through postsecondary education, which will greatly enhance the depth and robustness of the State's data. This application clearly lists Georgia's status for each of the elements of the America COMPETES Act.

**(C)(2) Accessing and using State data**

5 5 5

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(C)(2) The heads of all Georgia education agencies jointly developed a comprehensive plan for a single Statewide Longitudinal Data System and signed a joint MOU outlining how the system would be governed and the types of access to be granted so that pertinent data would be available to all appropriate constituents. An organizational chart displaying the structure of the Data Systems committee and its mission is displayed in the application. This plan has been well thought out and will provide valuable information to multiple users.

**(C)(3) Using data to Improve Instruction**

18 18 18

**(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(C)(3) As part of each LEA's MOU with the Georgia Department of Education is the requirement that the district invest in and fully utilize an Instructional Improvement system, which will include access to student-level data along with enhanced assessment resources. Additionally, the State will assist in developing Instructional Improvement Reports for teachers, which will be invaluable for use in professional development. The State is also participating in the Teacher-Student Data Link Project to assist with data-driven instruction. Well-developed plans were delineated for Georgia's Teacher-Student Data Link Project to enhance the use of data to clearly support instruction. Researchers will have access to these data to perform additional in-depth analyses. This represents a cohesive plan that engages appropriate stakeholders.

**Total**

47 47 47

**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	21	20	20	
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(D)(1) Georgia legislation authorizes LEAs and Regional Educational Service Agencies to offer alternative routes to certification independent of institutions of higher education. There is also an alternative route for school leaders. The requirements for Georgia's alternative certification programs for both teachers and school leaders are clearly specified. Georgia is currently able to monitor, evaluate, and identify areas of teacher and principal shortage; however, this process will be greatly simplified when its longitudinal data system is fully implemented.				
<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	58	58	58	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	28	28	
<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(D)(2)(1) Georgia has established clear approaches to measuring student achievement and growth. The State will create Effectiveness Measure for teachers, leaders and districts. Each of the aforementioned measures will have a student growth component. (D)(2)(ii) Georgia's Technical Advisory Committee will work closely with the Department to study the components of the educator evaluation system. The components of this system include: a qualitative rubric-based evaluation tool with multiple rating categories; a value-added score, which measures the effect of a teacher or a school on student learning; a reduction of the student achievement gap at the classroom and school level; and other quantitative measures to be developed in collaboration with participating LEAs. (D)(2)(iii) Georgia has clearly delineated specific components which must be part of teacher and principal annual evaluations. Additionally, teachers and principals will be surveyed annually to assess how well the evaluation process is meeting its core objectives. (D)(2)(iv) Georgia has delineated numerous decisions regarding teacher and principal development that will be informed by its Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Measure system. The full implementation of this very comprehensive plan will have a very positive impact on the effectiveness of Georgia's teachers and principals, since multiple checkpoints will be used to measure effectiveness.				
<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	25	25	25	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15	15	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10	10	
<b>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(D)(3)(i) and (ii) Georgia will institute a multi-pronged process to help ensure that the most effective teachers and leaders will be placed in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools. Monetary incentives will be put in place to incentivize student growth, especially in high-need schools. "Signing bonuses" will be given to effective teachers who choose to move to rural high-needs schools. Bonuses will vest over a 3-year				

period for service in a high-needs school and will be contingent on meeting a high threshold on the Teacher Effectiveness Measure. Additionally, Georgia is entering into partnership with various organizations, such as UTeach, to increase the pipeline for high-need schools and hard-to-staff subject areas. The equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals will have long-term impacts on a systematic plan to ensure the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals across the state.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	14	13	13	
<b>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> (D)(4) Georgia is requiring its teacher and leader preparation programs to track and evaluate the impact of student achievement data of their graduates who are teaching and to use this information to strengthen their preparation programs. The State will track the rate at which beginning teachers who participate in an induction program move to the Career Teacher Level. Teacher preparation programs will create partnerships with school districts in which distinguished teachers mentor student teachers. Georgia will continue to expand preparation options that produce effective teachers and principals. The systematic plan for improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs will provide a vehicle for speedy and sustainable growth in effectiveness among Georgia's teachers and principals.				
<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	20	20	20	
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Table D-5 very effectively summarizes the wide array of professional development that will be available to the state's educators. These include data-informed professional development, needed induction programs, and common planning, among other components, the sum of which will lead to a well-researched and proven set of combined methodologies, when implemented appropriately, as is evidenced in this section, will provide strong support to Georgia's teachers and principals.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>136</b>	

**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> (E)(1) Current legislation enables the State to monitor school performance and intervene to assist the lowest performing schools and LEAs. The establishment of the Single Statewide Accountability System will greatly facilitate this initiative.				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> (E)(2)(i) Georgia has a well-planned and sound process for identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools. The system is described in detail throughout the proposal. (E)(2)(ii) Georgia's development and use of its Differentiated Accountability Plan will allow the state to focus on the specific needs of the lowest-achieving schools. This multi-pronged plan provides a series of increasing interventions to support the				

States' schools at the level most appropriate for the situation and to provide sufficient state supports to help ensure the effective turnaround of these schools.				
Total	50	50	50	

**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> (F)(1)(i) The percentage of total revenues allocated to education has increased each year. In 2008 it represented 58.2% of the budget, in 2009 it was 60.4%, and for 2010 it will be 62.5%(F)(1)(11) A combined approach to ensure equitable funding is detailed to identify multiple sources and approaches to provide avenues for success to turnaround schools and districts in need.				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	40	40	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> (F) (2) (i)Georgia's charter school laws do not prohibit or inhibit the development of high-performing charter schools. In fact, Georgia is ranked #4 in the nation in terms of charter laws and commitment to charter education, according to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Georgia has no cap on the number of charter schools that can be authorized or the number of students that charter schools can enroll. (F)(2)(ii) Applicable statutes are in place regarding procedures for approval, monitoring, holding accountable, reauthorizing, and closing charter schools. (F)(2)(iii) All locally approved charter schools are treated no less favorably than traditional district schools with regard to funding. (F)(2)(iv) The Georgia General Assembly created a charter school facilities grant program in 2004 and has funded it every year since 2005. This program has provided the State with additional supports for obtaining/maintaining charter school facilities. (F)(2)(v) Other innovative public schools, such as Early Colleges, may operate in Georgia.				
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	5	5	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> (F)(3) In 2008 an initiative was begun in Georgia to study local board governance and recommend best practices. The results of that study were used to craft legislation on that topic. Its increased focus on school and district accountability has resulted in a sound and often-emulated accountability system for Georgia's schools. Other thoughtfully planned initiatives include the redesign of educator preparation programs for teachers and school leaders.				
Total	55	55	55	

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The theme of STEM permeates this application. It is clear that all components of Georgia's education system from PK-16 will be positively impacted by these far-reaching initiatives, which use differing and complimentary approaches for success, including elements such as differentiated pay for new STEM				

teachers and for elementary teachers with mathematics and science endorsements, performance bonuses based on STEM, elevating in priority the Science AYP indicator, an expansion of the partnership between Georgia Tech, the State, and the Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics and Computing. These and other STEM-centered initiatives and priorities are detailed in this section.

<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
--------------	-----------	-----------	-----------	--

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

This is a far-reaching and extremely well-constructed application designed to positively impact all facets of education in Georgia. Pertinent themes were woven throughout the application and supported by significant data. Additionally, all players are on board with these initiatives. STEM and funding equity are major themes that are highlighted throughout the application.

<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
--------------	--	----------	----------	--

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>481</b>	
--------------------	------------	------------	------------	--



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Georgia Application #2160GA-5



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Int
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>64</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	14	

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The proposal pays impressive attention to regulatory barriers and the need to create a learning culture and there is strong evidence of collaboration and alignment statewide across a range of partners and constituencies - now and in the past. Their goals map across the GA strategic plan and RTT well. They show a record of past performance and an understanding of and commitment to the RTT overall priorities. The state secures strong commitment from its LEAs, as demonstrated with both its Memorandum of Understanding and scope of work, signed by all LEA Superintendents (or equivalents) and Presidents of the Local School Boards. The application translates its LEA participation into statewide impact effectively and well. It does not, however, address the fact that only 12.7% of the state's LEAs are participating and indicate any strategies to ensure comprehensive statewide impact, impacting the score for (iii).

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

Their response in the panel discussion concerning how 12.7% of the state LEAs could translate to statewide impact was both compelling and persuasive. The Governor outlined a sound process for inviting LEAs to join and indicated that he wanted "true believers," who would see this opportunity as the right one. He and the panel further spoke to how they plan to use the (positive) results of this effort to influence others to join and to become part of the future efforts, leading to statewide impact.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	16	18	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	6	6	

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The description that the Implementation Director will "defer" to the exec board raises a red flag about formal authority and aligning the org chart with practice. It doesn't sound like a strong enough partnership for efficacy. There is a thread here around involving decision-makers at the right level. For example, while there is ample detail about the communications strategy and how they are integrating this with a public support campaign, it is unclear how this includes efforts to listen to communities and families and to make the right decisions at the policy and implementation level. This links to a way of thinking about input and engagement - it is unclear from plan that principals and teachers are going to be fully engaged in their efforts to use broad stakeholder support. They did teachers surveys for the proposal, but offer no future ways to have principals and teachers as partners in the implementation of the plan. There are no letters from any teacher

associations or support organizations. The Innovation Fund is creative and leverages Race to the Top (RTT) funds well.

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The panel spoke effectively on both the system for organizing work and how they will partner across agencies, with the Implementation Director at the helm. There are still unanswered questions about how it will continue after the period of funding has ended.

Their presentation and response to questions did not provide further evidence of a genuine and thorough engagement of principals and teachers. The majority of responses discussed surveys to these groups, but little about the state's commitment to effectively including principal and teacher input at a high level and how they would ensure it serve as part of the efforts moving forward.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	19	19	

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The proposal presents evidence of progress in each reform area and demonstrates strength in past performance and an understanding of and clear vision for linking national standards and assessments to performance. Some of the indicators of past performance are: successfully moved 500 NI schools out of NI status since 2003, NAEP gains slightly higher than national, some narrowing of the achievement gap. With this "very positive narrowing of race-based and poverty-based gaps," African American and Hispanic students are still achieving at levels significantly below their white peers. In addition, Asian students are completely excluded from their reporting. With continued gaps in sub-groups in NAEP performance for both Reading and Math at both the 4th and 8th grade levels, this performance would need to be more robust to raise the score for (A)(3)(ii.) Concerning graduation rates, more detail about the impact of the state's move from the Leaver Rate to the Cohort Rate and the impact on data collection and interpretation, would strengthen this section.

<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>111</b>	
--------------	------------	------------	------------	--

**B. Standards and Assessments**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>36</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	5	16	

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The proposal indicates that GA has been at the forefront of these efforts, with the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) and through the Governor's leadership in the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Schools Chief's leadership role in the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO.) They also have the background with the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) and identify a target date of July 2010 for adopting common standards, showing a confidence in their standards and the systems to implement them. (B)(1)(ii) does not provide a high quality plan for how the state will ensure adoption and include real local participation and aligned practice in the classroom. This may look very different than the

state's experience with the GPS and requires a plan for anticipating those differences and providing needed support around those changes at the state and local level.

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The panel demonstrated that they have a high-quality plan for adoption of standards across the state by August 2, 2010. Outstanding questions about how they will ensure this adoption with genuine local participation and aligned practice at the school and classroom level prevented this score from being raised higher.

<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
--	-----------	-----------	-----------	--

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

GA is part of both the CCSSO Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Achieve Consortium, with 36 and 27 participating states respectively. The proposal shows thoughtful attention to addressing gaps between the current assessment system and new standards and cites their experience with the GPS to help bridge that gap during the implementation phase.

<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
--	-----------	-----------	-----------	--

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The proposal outlines a strong program for proficiency-based advancement and Figure B1 shows a thoughtful progression on implementation – including a clear time line and responsibilities. It looks to be an ambitious and realistic plan to begin testing the common core, with time to first understand challenges and address them effectively. This section does not mention, however, efforts to build local districts and district leaders to makes these transitions and to support their employees effectively and well. This could jeopardize the state's efforts to translate the standards and information from assessments into classroom practice for all students, including high-need students.

<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>62</b>	
--------------	-----------	-----------	-----------	--

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state meets 10 of the America COMPETES Act elements, with elements 7 and 12 in process. The proposal shows a track record of effective data collection statewide and is taking steps to set up for an even more powerful system as 1 of 5 states participating in an National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) pilot funded by the Gates Foundation.

<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	
--	----------	----------	----------	--

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

There is evidence of both intent and a solid plan to make data accessible to important constituencies and to learn from best practice in other states. The coordination of the Alliance of Education Agency Heads both in crafting a "comprehensive vision," and in determining in advance how a new data system will be managed and used, shows evidence of a high-quality plan. The parent portals and student profiles are promising in using technology to promote access and communicating well with families. More detail about what is known

and needs to be learned from these efforts would strengthen this score. The action plan is ambitious and realistic.

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The state has a high-quality plan to use data to improve instruction. In sections (C)(3)(i) and (ii), more information is needed about how state education leaders will get LEAs, especially those with lowest achieving schools, on board with the ambitious and necessary goal of teachers spending "less time on manual efforts...and more time to design student-appropriate and student-differentiated instruction..." The Teacher Student Data Link Project (TSDL) looks promising in having states develop a common approach and a learning community to make this more accessible and less difficult for teachers and end-users. Section (iii) articulates well how they will make data available to researchers by developing partnerships and shows a strong link between obtaining the data and having it used effectively to improve instruction - including in teacher preparation programs and college success.</p>				
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b>				
<p>The panel made a strong presentation on how it will use data to improve instruction.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>	

**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The proposal builds a case for a robust program for alternative routes to certification through the Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy (GaTAPP). This program meets all five elements of alternative routes to certification. For principals, the narrative states that "the Permit route for school leaders had been infrequently requested or used." It further states that they will be proposing a new alternative route for principals, but does not demonstrate their understanding of and particular response to the reasons why the Permit route didn't produce the results they sought and exactly what the state will do about that in future. More about the challenges is important to knowing if they have found the right "fix." (D)(1)(3) indicates that current systems do not support adequate monitoring, evaluation and identification of areas of teacher and principal shortage. While this section does address some of the technical aspects of improving the data systems, it does not sufficiently address how it will prepare teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage.</p>				
<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	1	1	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	11	11	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	9	9	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	26	26	
<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The proposal emphasizes that "accountability at each step of the system-wide effectiveness measurement system must be accompanied by appropriate levels of support." This link between accountability and</p>				

support builds a strong model. Two pieces are missing: (1) the state's definition of student growth and how to measure it, (2) How the Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM), the Leader Effectiveness Measure (LEM), the District Effectiveness Measure (DEM), the Teacher Preparation Program Effectiveness Measure (TPPEM) and the Leadership Preparation Program Effectiveness Measure (LPPEM), evaluate for this growth in students. It mentions The Technical Advisory Council (TAC), but does not provide sufficient detail to demonstrate its effectiveness. Section (D)(2)(iii) emphasizes that they will "ensure that annual evaluations are timely, meaningful and constructive" and identifies a process that is also "actionable." This meets the criteria. Section (iv) is clear about how evaluation data will inform development of and compensation for teachers and principals, as well as decisions to removed ineffective teachers and principals. There are pending changes to legislation in this area as well.

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The state did not offer a cogent definition of student growth, speaking only to the process, including the vendor that they will choose to monitor it. This didn't get at their perspective on defining it as the measure for their evaluation measures.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	13	13	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8	

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Section (i) shows a keen understanding of the state's resources and challenges and targets high need schools. There is evidence of their intentions around strong partnerships with groups like TFA and UTeach as well as initiatives to grow-their-own. To build local capacity using national model learning - The Grow Your Own Teacher Program (GYOT) is a thoughtful approach to developing a rurally targeted corps of teachers. There is less narrative on addressing hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas. It is difficult to discern the efficacy of current systems and the intent of new ones, outside of the chart on goals 1 and 2 and the discussion of partnerships. There is also detail missing, in both (i) and (ii) on the systems to ensure distribution over time.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
---	-----------	-----------	-----------	--

**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The proposal presents a clear view, including standards mentioned in other sections, of how they intend to improve these programs. There are solid letters of support from key university partners, showing partnership in improving current options. This score could be strengthened with more narrative focused on the strategy for and plans to expand these preparation and credentialing options and programs over time. In addition, more information about high standards for principals would strengthen this score.

**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The panel acknowledged that this has been a weak area and expressed an intention to improve. Still, a clear plan was not presented.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
--	-----------	-----------	-----------	--

**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Table D5 and the narrative show credible, targeted attention to support, but pays insufficient attention to principals. There are a number of solid plans to support new initiatives for teachers. The performance

measures further indicate what it looks like in schools when this support is in place, which is helpful in seeing that the plan is both ambitious and realistic. In the sections labeled "great teachers and leaders" and "low-achieving schools," there is missing detail on the programmatic initiatives -- such as focusing on the development and support of leaders and 1:1/group/peer coaching - and to aligning systems and removing barriers to effective implementation of practices designed to improve student learning outcomes.

Total	138	105	105	
-------	-----	-----	-----	--

**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Legislation is in place to ensure intervention is possible at both the LEA and school level. The Differentiated Accountability Pilot (DA) plan, launched in school year 2008-2009, offers further distinction of school needs and interventions and has allowed them to vary "the intensity and type of interventions used and focus resources on schools with the greatest needs."				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	37	39	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	32	34	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> This section outlines definitively an ambitious and achievable plan. It discusses the need to work with understanding of root causes of these persistently low-achieving schools, to address at both school and LEA level and with a clear methodology and focus on early grades. There is a comprehensive set of supports and a "web of support" for high need students.				
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b> The panel spoke to how their team will focus on the 33 remaining schools on their lowest-achieving list as well as schools that have joined that list.				
Total	50	47	49	

**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	8	8	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The application meets the criteria (F)(1)(i) and (ii). Revenues committed to education increased from 58.2% to 60.4% from 2008 to 2009 when state funding "plunged 9%" during the same period. There are robust state-level and LEA-level interventions reflected in state law and the use of state funds to ensure equitable funding. Missing, however, is the impact data to show that the equalization formula works to ensure equitable funding.				

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	31	34	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Section (F)(2)(i) indicates that the conditions are present to support innovation in charter and other new schools. These include: no caps on charters and legislation passed in 2008 that created a state-level Commission "that can authorize charter schools directly." In section (F)(2)(ii) Table F3 shows there were 8 less (29 to 21) charter applications in 2009 than 2008. The application mentions that some schools pulled out of the process earlier, but does not say why or what meaning the state makes of that change. There is missing narrative to show how the state interprets and will address in future, possible conditions and/or accountability standards that may have had such an impact. Section (F)(2)(iii) shows that per-pupil charter school expenditures are slightly lower than traditional schools, but still greater than 90% of the per-pupil funding for traditional public school students. For section (F)(2)(iv), the statute does not provide funding ("if feasible" is the language used), but there are solid provisions for supporting facility acquisition, including a special grant program and local school board activity to "require local districts to make unused facilities available to charter schools at no lease cost." Annual funding awards from the state augment this. Innovative autonomous schools are more subject to the vagaries of local relationships. More detail about the impact that these relationships and a lack of state-level intervention have on these schools' success or failure would strengthen this section.</p>				
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b>				
<p>The panel offered a sound, if not fully comprehensive, explanation for the reduction in charter applications and why some may have pulled out of the process. That explanation elevates the score for (F)(2)(ii).</p>				
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	4	4	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The proposal effectively meets the criterion for (F)(3) and presents a strong case that it has put in place and has a plan to continue to develop additional conditions for reform. These include a pending state resolution (SB 84) to "address key gaps in Georgia law relating to school board governance," and legislation passed in 2008 to provide greater flexibility to LEAs that demonstrate they can meet accountability standards.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>46</b>	

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The proposal meets this priority in numerous areas of the proposal, captured well in this section as a summary. These areas include teacher preparation, a legislative agenda, student coursework and tracking, and partnerships outside of the school system.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Georgia's proposal thoroughly addresses each of the four areas and makes connections across them to support a coherent, state-led and locally focused strategy for education reform in the state. While the application meets this priority, there is one very serious area to be addressed to ensure effective statewide adoption and implementation of reforms. Only 23 of the state's LEAs have signed on as participating (12.7% of the state). As indicated, this number raises serious questions as to the state's capacity to successfully implement and achieve the goals in the plans statewide. If progress is made in this subset of LEAs and considerable attention is given to subsequently expanding high-quality reform to a broader group of LEAs, especially those with high need populations and low-achieving schools, then this priority would cut across the entire application more completely. To show what interventions led to the LEA participation results they achieved, Georgia should also provide more information about how their outreach process to LEAs was structured and carried out, why such a small percentage joined the proposal, what their concerns are about this experience and how they plan to ensure that they can achieve their goals.

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The state offered a compelling explanation as to how their level of LEA participation will lead to successful implementation and achievement of their goals statewide. Statewide success still requires considerable attention to expanding high-quality reform and learning over time.

<b>Total</b>			0	0	
--------------	--	--	---	---	--

<b>Grand Total</b>	500	408	430		
--------------------	-----	-----	-----	--	--