



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Illinois Application #2520IL-1

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	48	48	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3	3	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	37	37	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8	8	

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

All four areas of educational reform that make up Rtt are addressed in the state's education reform activity and its plan to expand that reform. There remain a set of issues that may negatively affect the reform activity that center around the reliability and validity of the state measure of student achievement and student progress. This measurement system has had problems in the recent past and it is not presently in place, although policy is in place to move forward and funding to ameliorate this situation is proposed. A clear set of goals related to working statewide are articulated. These goals include some 74% of state LEAs and 81% of schools that serve low income students. The MOU with the districts directly commits them to participating in all aspects of the plan. A number of professional association leaders in LEAs with collective bargaining units also signed the MOU, however, some 60% did not. There is substantial evidence provided in letters of support from a wide array of public and private partners in the state. The state will make provisions to establish "Super LEA" partnerships where the state, the LEA and the teachers association have agreed specifically to all articulated goals and adjusting agreements/contracts related to achieving those goals. This support is identifiable and to some degree beyond just indicating general support for the initiative. The reform timeline is congruent with previous reform activities in this state.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	17	17	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	12	12	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	5	5	

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

The proposal provides a broad framework related to the management and implementation of the plan. A state P-20 Council together with local partnerships, state consortia and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will lead the effort. The ISBE will administer the implementation. This is a clear leadership responsibility in an office that oversees all state education programs—a distinct positive for integration of all state programs with Rtt. The specific management of the activities, the accountability mechanisms and the improvement process for the plan are not detailed. In most cases, it is possible to determine budget allocations as they are tied to specific goals and objectives. Support from a broad array of stake holders is evident in the appendix, particularly for private sector partners, other non-K/12 education sectors (higher education and early childhood). Specific "partnering" agreements were not always clear although support was positively expressed.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	8	8
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	3	3
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	5	5

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

The state has a clear record of legislative education policy reform in all areas specified for Rtt. It has addressed in recent legislation the establishment of high standards, student assessments and data systems development/implementation. This law was passed in 2009 and will be enacted with the assistance of the proposed plan. Of particular significance is the proposed comprehensive "Measurement Plan" that will be the center of solid students, school, teacher data for purposes of guiding the Rtt reforms. The absence of such a system now could slow down immediate reform activities and its construction is essential to the overall state reform efforts. Much rests on the development and implementation of the "Measurement Plan." The state does demonstrate enhancement in student progress on NAEP and state testing for all students and for NCLB related subgroups. However, there is little evidence of achievement gap reduction with regard to these subgroups. In particular, the graduation rates for Black, Hispanics and American Indians have been steady at low rates.

Total	125	73	73
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	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)

The state is participating in the "Common Core" standards development with a large number of states and will adopt the standards by August 2, 2010.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state is working with WIDA, a highly regarded state consortium, to develop high quality assessments. This is a mid-USA state consortium that has focused on developing high internationally benchmarked standards and utilized cross-state expertise to generate reliable and valid student performance assessments in various academic domains. In addition, the state belongs to the "Florida" consortium and the MOSAIC consortium. Overall, the state is working with more than 30 states in these combined partnerships.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state provides an aggressive plan to work with participating LEAs to support the transition and implementation of the new standards and assessments. Goals for elementary and high schools are articulated with a reasonable timeline. A STEM Learning Exchange will focus on high school reform and

move participating high schools to high standards, integrated with new curriculum, professional development and student assessments.

Total	70	70	70	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

The state now has a new (2009) law that mandates the development and implementation of a data system that includes all of the 12 elements of the COMPETES Act. The existing data system has 10 of the 12 elements of the COMPETES Act.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3	3	
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state has plans to develop a comprehensive system to access data identified as the "Measurement Plan" that will allow access of data broadly to parents, teachers, principals and other stakeholders. This could be a well designed effort to make available education data in the state to all, at least electronically. It is not clear how this data can be accessed by those populations that may not be able or comfortable accessing electronic information or may need access in a different language.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	12	12	
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(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

A specific plan is described that can provide comprehensive educator access to the data. Specifically, the use of a "cloud" digital environment will be developed with computer experts and participating representatives of LEAs and other stakeholders. This should provide a comprehensive data environment for input and analysis. In addition, there will be specific and designated efforts in the Rtt office to provide support for training on data access and use by educators, although these were not detailed. Access to the data by the ICEPR, an existing research consortium, will be enhanced so as to generate research availability at the state and LEA level. Details of this type of potentially useful set of partnerships were not detailed.

Total	47	35	35	
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	17	17	

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

The state offers numerous legal alternative routes to certification and over 700 certificates were issued via these routes this last year. The process for monitoring educator shortages resides in an annual survey to districts regarding such shortages. It is not evident how reliable this survey is or how it is utilized to address the identified shortages.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	37	37
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	3
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	12	12
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	17	17

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

There have been technical/management problems with the state test and the state is responding and recovering from these. Plans are underway to address these issues with a new data system by 2012-13, although this will be a challenge. With this system in place, the plan for improving teacher and principal effectiveness can be implemented in a timely fashion with potentially positive results. The evaluation efforts will utilize an already existent teacher evaluation tool in use by some LEAs—the Danielson Framework. This tool does incorporate at least 50% of the evaluation on student performance—further enhancement of this system will be guided by key stakeholders including teachers and principals. If all the pieces fall into place, the plan is achievable with positive, solid impacts to the state's education reform efforts. The system will include other elements of educator evaluation (the other 50%) which were not specifically addressed. The state makes clear in its plan the positive aspect of providing initial and ongoing technical support for the implementation of the evaluations, beginning with "Super LEAs." Participating LEAs will receive school improvement grants to assist in the evaluation system implementation to support individual educator development. The state makes it clear that yearly evaluations will be utilized for various purposes including retention and full credentialing of non-tenured teachers and yearly evaluation of principals. Tenured teachers will be reviewed every two years. But details are not available with regard to the scope for which the evaluations will be utilized for compensation, promotion, or removal. Overall, the state plan for a robust educator evaluator system leading to educator effectiveness addresses most key aspects of the Rtt criteria, but details are unavailable for other elements.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	14	14
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	8	8
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6	6

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

With the new educator evaluation system in place, anchored by the implementation of the "Measurement Plan", the state will develop and publish publicly an "Index of Teacher Academic Capital." This public articulation can be helpful in indentifying, statewide, the significant areas for distribution of effective educators. The state will attempt to address the broader issue of inequitable distribution of effective educators by up-grading the state credentialing standards for teachers and principals—the intent of this effort is to raise the level of competencies statewide of all educators. This will require policy changes at various levels and authority by elected and appointed political entities and could take some time and effort to accomplish. A set of "priority schools" will be supported by Rtt efforts and these schools will provide compensatory incentives and flexible funding and related opportunities for principals and teachers. These incentives were not described in detail. The state did provide a minimal plan that provides tuition waivers for development of new teachers to address special high need categories such as ELL and special education—it did not address efforts to support the development of effective teachers in these areas. A very specific area of teacher development aimed at STEM expands present state initiatives in this area building on existent partnerships that provide professional development and summer externships. There will be in place

some incentives and special targeted grant programs to LEAs and schools to grow effective educators. Overall, this plan has important components included but lacks specificity.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	8	8	
(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The state will rely heavily on the implementation of the "Measurement Plan" to provide key data that links teachers to student performance and teacher preparation entities. Doing so will allow the state to assess preparation effectiveness utilizing student performance. The state also plans to adopt new and more rigorous standards for principal certification and to require all 49 approved teacher preparation programs to be reviewed by NCTQ in an effort to assist these programs understand their own quality and advance their efforts to improve. There is no indication how the data generated by this effort will have consequences related to those programs that may be identified as "effective" or "ineffective."				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	15	15	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The state will develop an intensive induction and mentoring program in partnership with the New Teacher Center, a well recognized national entity providing this type of support to teachers. A new Principal Support System will be developed. These mechanisms have the possibility of providing critical support to educators in LEAs—details of these efforts are not provided. Links between poverty schools and the National Board Certification and the Illinois Math and Science Academy are also planned so as to maximize efforts to develop highly effective teachers at these schools. For principals, a Distinguished Principal Leadership Institute will be developed so as to enhance the pool of school leaders that can be identified and called on to assist in development of effective principals.—no details are provided for these efforts. It is not evident how these efforts are linked so as to maximize impact.				
Total	138	91	91	

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	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The ISBE has broad legal/policy authority to intervene in low performing schools and LEAs including removing board members, appointing and independent authority and/or dissolving the LEA.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)
 The state has been able to identify the lowest performing schools through the presently available data system. The new, proposed comprehensive system will allow even better identification of these schools. The state will utilize the Illinois Partnership Zone Program to intensify broad efforts to turn around low performing schools, and, is prepared to utilize all the legal remedies at its disposal to do so. It will prioritize

100 low performing high schools in a targeted drop out prevention effort--If successful, this proposed state turn around program can have a significant statewide impact in key areas of identified "need."

Total	50	50	50	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	

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

State revenue dedicated to education is higher in 2009 than 2008. State resources are distributed so as to address issues of poverty and special need with a formula developed for those purposes.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	38	38	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

A new state law has increased the "cap" for charter schools from 60 to 120--39 are currently operating in the state. Although there is a legal cap, there seems to be sufficient room for adding new charter schools in the years to come. Present state policy and state entitleis exist with authority for creation and evaluation of charters and funding streams are equal to other public schools. A state charter school fund allows for start-up costs including materials and capital expenditures. The state allows for "contract schools", as an alternative to non-profits to manage schools with significant policy flexibility.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform condltions	5	5	5	
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(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Overall, the state has been moving in a positive reform direction and has been accumulating a comprehensive profile of reform activities. It has established wide support for its reform efforts, established important key partnerships that it can build on, and has been working with other states in its development of high standards and reliable and valid student assessments.

Total	55	53	53	
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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)

The state makes a particular effort to include STEM education reform in all aspects of its proposal by describing the development of new standards, assessments and professional development and teacher production plans. This builds on a set of existing state efforts and together these intersections can move the state forward in the STEM reform arena producing much higher standards, new curricula, an enhanced teaching workforce, and a greater pipeline of students in the STEM area.

Total	15	15	15	
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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)

The state puts forward a comprehensive plan that builds on a solid history of education reform. The plan addresses all areas of the Rtt requirements, providing ample plans, evidence timetables and resource information in each area. The goals are ambitious but attainable although the state will face challenges related to its overall, comprehensive data system and how it will be used to achieve its articulated goals.

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The presentation provided ample opportunity for discussion of substantive state capacity issues that may relate to the implementation and final outcomes for this Rtt effort. This state must address several key elements in the plan in a timely manner including adoption of new standards, development of new assessments, development of a statewide educator professional assessment and development tool, and a data/information system that would allow the reform plan to be enacted. Unfortunately, the presentation and answers provided during the on-site session with the state team did not provide any additional clarifications that enhanced the information provided in the proposal.

Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	387	387	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Illinois Application #2520IL-2

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	47	47	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3	3	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	37	37	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	7	7	

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

The applicant has set forth a clear statement of its vision for using Race to the Top (RTTT) funds to promote a reform agenda. The applicant describes the State's commitment to advancing education reform and directly acknowledges several significant challenges (a fragmented, diverse LEA structure, insufficient State capacity and resources, and a catastrophic failure of the standards achievement test introduced in 2006) that the State has faced and continues to face in transforming its educational system. These challenges are serious, and unless overcome, will severely hamper the applicant's ability to sustain reforms. Given these challenges, at least some of the goals may be presented on an unrealistic timeline: for example, developing and implementing a menu of pre-approved formative and interim "Assessments for Learning" that all 869 LEAs can use to measure student growth and inform instruction by the end of the 2010-2011 school year. 366 out of 869 LEAs signed on to participate in RTTT (42%). These participating LEAs include 64% of schools in the State, 74 percent of K-12 students, and 81% of students in poverty. 100% of LEA superintendent signatures were obtained, 75% of local school board president signatures, and 32% of local teacher's union leader signatures. This may indicate a strong potential for no cooperation and perhaps resistance from local teachers unions in some or even a strong majority of participating LEAs. The MOU used by the applicant has been modified from the model provided by the U.S. Department of Education but retains binding language on what the participating LEAs agree to do. Some elements of the Scope of Work were mandatory in order to participate, and others were optional. The applicant provides summary information that 100% of participating LEAs have signed on to all mandatory aspects of the State's MOU (a summary chart shows 100% participation in each of the 16 elements of State reform plans in the model MOU), but a district-by-district chart of LEA participation in each of the 16 elements is not provided. In addition, certain reform commitments applied only to Illinois Priority Schools—those significantly underperforming schools that fall in the bottom 5% of student achievement statewide. The LEA MOU with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is the only that contained deviations from the applicant's standard form. It contains variations aimed at preventing CPS from becoming overextended in capacity by limiting the number of schools CPS must consider Illinois Priority Schools to Tier 1 schools, as defined by the Federal requirements of the LEA's School Improvement Grant. In addition, CPS under the MOU will implement teacher and principal evaluation systems under a phased-in time-schedule included in the final draft of the State's Performance Evaluation Reform Act (SB315), and CPS will be allowed to continue to use annual State assessments as the sole measure of student work, which is current CPS practice. Appendix A1-5 sets forth ambitious goals for overall and subgroups for increasing student achievement as reported by NAEP and State assessments. No charts are presented focusing on expected decreases in the achievement gaps, although the reviewer can ascertain the size of the projected gaps over time by comparing the achievement charts in the Appendices. In general, the Black, Hispanic, and Low-income subgroups have achievement

goals that are more aggressive, both in terms of timing and trajectory of student outcomes, leading to narrowing of achievement gaps over the period of the RTTT program. The applicant provides aggressive goals for increasing overall and subgroup graduation rates, and increasing college enrollment overall (but not by subgroup). No information is presented on increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit that is applicable to a degree within two years of enrollment in an institution of higher education.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	26	26
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	16	16
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10

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

The applicant's capacity is a significant issue with this State. The State agency has had far fewer employees directly working with school districts in the field over the past decade and has shifted to increased management of partnership organizations and regional delivery systems. The Governor has charged a P-20 Council, established by the Illinois General Assembly, with advising on the implementation of the State's reform plan and identifying the need for resources to sustain reforms. The State has thoughtfully considered how it will rely on the State education agency's existing partners as well as new entities and partners and how it will draw on multi-State collaborations. Despite its capacity challenge, the State has provided evidence that this collaborative approach with partners will be sufficient to provide strong leadership and dedicated teams to take the State down a path of significant reform. RTTT will accelerate, not redirect, reform already underway. The applicant's budget seeks to leverage effectively State, Federal, and outside funds to build systems that will move reforms at a faster pace and to ensure the reforms can be sustained after the grant period. The State's budget is well designed and indicates the State has a good likelihood of being able to implement its RTTT proposal in areas of grant administration and budget reporting, performance measurement tracking, and fund disbursement. The applicant has a wide range of letters of support collected, including from the State's two teacher's unions.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	16	16
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	12	12

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

The applicant demonstrates that it has made progress in each of the four education reform areas and positioned itself to build upon those reforms with RTTT, although the state has faced a serious challenge with its statewide assessment system, which cannot be used, without considerable investment, to measure year-to-year teacher contribution to student growth. The applicant provides evidence of improved overall and subgroup student outcomes in recent years and small increases in high school graduation rates overall and in almost all subgroups (migrant students are a notable exception). On the Illinois Standards Achievement Test, there have been significant achievement increases for all tested grades in both math and reading, and the achievement gaps between several, but not all, subgroups are decreasing. On the Prairie State Achievement Examination, overall results over the past seven years have remained the same in reading and decreased slightly in math, with mixed results in decreasing achievement gaps. On NAEP, math assessment results showed strong improvement between 2003 and 2009, but the reading assessments showed either no gains or significant decreases between 2003 and 2007. Racial/ethnic achievement gaps remained unchanged or decreased on NAEP. No mention is made of achievement gaps with regard to students with disabilities (SWD) or English language learners (ELL), or of exclusion rates on NAEP for SWD and ELL students.

Total	125	89	89
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	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)

The applicant is a member of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, involving 48 States, 2 territories, and the District of Columbia, and it plans to adopt the Common Core State Standards in math and English language arts no later than August 2, 2010. The State is also part of the American Diploma Project, along with 33 other States. Requested documentation is complete.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

All of the assessments being contemplated for implementation in the State will be aligned with the Common Core Standards. The State is participating in a number of assessment consortia: Florida Consortium (17 States), MOSAIC (27 States), Balanced Assessment Consortium (36 States), SMARTER Consortium (23 States), and the Achieve Consortium (27 States). Requested documentation is complete.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20	
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant provides a detailed, thorough plan for how participating LEAs will deliver standards-aligned instruction in every classroom and for every student, and for how the State will deliver comprehensive LEA supports for standards implementation, with foci on assessment tools to inform classroom instruction and promote instructional alignment and on high-quality STEM instructional resources. A timeline is provided that identifies responsible parties and key activities relevant to the implementation of standards-aligned instructional systems in the State. Detailed performance measures and targets are included.

Total	70	70	70	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

The applicant currently has 10 of 12 America Competes Act elements in its statewide longitudinal data system. The remaining elements will be added by September 30, 2011, in accordance with the plans in the State's application for phase 2 of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund program.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State sets forth a high-quality plan for ensuring that data from the State's longitudinal data system are accessible to, and used to inform and engage, key stakeholders. The applicant will establish the Illinois Collaborative for Education Policy Research to support State policymaking and continuous improvement. This will be an independent organization with a governance structure linking it closely to State agencies, participating universities, and other educational stakeholders in Illinois. In addition, the State's longitudinal data system will also provide the core data to inform implementation and evaluation of the State's new teacher and principal evaluations through an independent research-based study.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	16	16
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(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant provides a high-quality, detailed plan for how it will use data to improve instruction. Through a State-district partnership for a learning and performance management system, the applicant will ensure that all participating LEAs can implement local instructional improvement systems that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness. The timeline for implementing this management system did not seem to be particularly aggressive (full implementation by fall 2013). Additionally, the Statewide System of Support and professional development and training will be adapted to ensure effective support on how to use Assessments for Learning, the learning and performance management system, and other local instructional improvement systems for purposes of continuous instructional improvement. Third, the applicant's plan provides that data from instructional improvement systems, together with State longitudinal data system data, will be available and accessible to researchers so that they can evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches as part of the applicant's plan for bringing the State's reform agenda to scale. A score in the "high" range is awarded for this subsection of the proposal.

Total	47	41	41
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

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

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

Following a statute passed in January 2010, the State now has four alternative certification programs that permit various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education and other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education, to provide alternate pathways for aspiring teachers and principals. In 2008-2009, 672 teachers and 38 administrators completed one of four existing programs. A fifth program (for teachers) has been discontinued, and a sixth (for administrators) is in the process of being developed. All of the 5 programs in use or being developed comply with all five program elements of the definition of alternative certification programs. The State has a satisfactory process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage. Narrative does not go into detail about the State's efforts or plans to prepare teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortages.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	47	47
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	12	12

(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	7	7
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	24	24

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

The applicant acknowledges that its current teacher and principal evaluation system is broken, with 99.6% of teachers rated satisfactory or better. Using a phased-in approach to implementation, the applicant is committing to evaluating 100% of teachers and principals based on robust performance evaluation systems that measure both professional practice and student growth, with clear expectations for both professional practice and student growth, meaningful feedback on performance, and an actionable plan for building on strengths and addressing short-comings. The plan for measuring student growth is awarded points in the "high" range for (D)(2)(i). The State acknowledges that the alignment, credibility, and usability of the existing annual State assessments are the largest obstacle to implementing consistent statewide measures of year-to-year student growth. In the short term, the applicant will work with LEAs to use locally developed measures of student growth in the evaluation of teachers and principals and phase in statewide implementation of a redesigned performance evaluation system in all State schools and LEAs in multiple phases between 2011-2012 and 2016-2017. The annual targets are achievable and pragmatic given the challenges the State currently faces with its existing system. A score in the "high" range is awarded for (D)(2)(ii). Multiple rating categories will be used to differentiate effectiveness during annual evaluations of both teachers and principals, with timely and constructive feedback. The evaluations will only be every two years for tenured teachers, however, and no detailed discussion of what "timely and constructive" feedback entails is provided. A score in the "middle" range is awarded for (D)(2)(iii). The State will require each participating LEA to demonstrate how teacher and principal evaluation systems will be designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement. The State has developed aggressive targets for ensuring that by the end of 2013-2014, 100% of participating LEAs will use teacher and principal evaluations for professional development, compensation and promotion, retention of effective teachers and principals, granting tenure, and removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals. However, these targets of 100% participation by participating LEAs in all performance measures for (D)(2)(d) seem to conflict with the State's comment in the narrative that it is not yet prepared to "immediately build a framework of statewide policies of such monumental consequence upon a still developing evaluation system." A score in the "high" end of the range were awarded for (D)(2)(iv), but not full points as a result of this conflict.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	11	11
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	7	7
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	4	4

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

The applicant documents that the Illinois Education Research Council has been tracking data on all State public school teachers since 2001 to measure changes in teacher qualifications and whether all students have equitable access to high-quality teachers. The applicant details the steps the State is taking to strengthen teacher and principal qualifications, which will result in a further "leveling up" of the caliber of teachers and principals in the State, with the most pronounced benefits occurring in the most disadvantaged schools. The applicant's E3 Program will provide funding to participating LEAs that can be allocated over the RTTT grant period for a variety of staffing incentives for Illinois Priority Schools. The MOUs entered into by the participating LEAs provide incentives for the LEAs and their unions to establish autonomy of Illinois Priority Schools to select and assign teachers to these schools in order to establish an effective teaching staff. However, because the determination of "highly effective" will be impacted by the State's implementation of new performance evaluation systems, the State was not able to establish baseline data or set annual targets for any of the performance metrics under (D)(3)(i). The applicant plans to expand existing programs and create new programs to increase the number of effective teachers in the areas of

STEM disciplines, special education, and language instruction programs. The chart for baseline data and annual targets for (D)(3)(ii) is not included in the proposal.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	10	10	
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant provides a detailed plan for linking student achievement and student growth to data to students' teachers and principals, linking this information to the in-state programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and publicly reporting the data for each credentialing program in the State. This will require strengthening existing preparation program requirements and establishing a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students. By the end of the 2013-2014 year, these public reporting mechanisms will be established. The State sets an ambitious goal of 100% of its 796 teacher credentialing programs and 33 principal credentialing programs linking student achievement and student growth by the end of the 2013-2014 year. In parallel to the development and implementation of these public reporting mechanisms, the State will recommend changes in program renewal requirements that relate to data on student growth outcomes for program graduates to the State Board of Education during the 2013-2014 year. The State Board will work with Associated Colleges of Illinois to use data on student achievement and growth for program graduates as a tool to identify those member institutions that are successfully preparing teachers in high-need schools and to expand their involvement in the State's High-Need School Internship program. The applicant's plan does not provide much detail on how it will expand existing credentialing options that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	17	17	
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant provides a high-quality plan for ensuring that all beginning teachers and principals in participating LEAs are supported through high-quality induction and mentoring programs and that more educators will be able to engage in common planning time and collaboration to accelerate student achievement and foster school improvement, especially in targeted secondary schools and their feeder middle schools. The applicant highlights activities to ensure that teacher and principal professional development resources in participating LEAs are targeted, measured, evaluated, and continuously improved. The State includes performance measures that demonstrate that dramatic scaling up of numerous kinds of support for all beginning teachers and principals will take place between 2010-2011 and 2013-2014. Issues of time needed by teachers and principals to participate in effective professional development is not addressed, and it is not clear what changes will be made to the types of professional development being offered.

Total	138	103	103	
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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	

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State has broad statutory authority to intervene in underperforming schools and districts. The State Superintendent, following State Board authorization, may intervene in school districts or schools remaining on the academic watch list for three years following placement on "academic watch status" (this term means Adequate Yearly Progress under NCLB has been missed for 4 years). A variety of actions may be taken under the State Board's authorization.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	37	37
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	32	32

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant sets forth a high-quality plan to identify and publicly report the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools. The State has established a list of "Illinois Priority Schools," which are those that are among the lowest-achieving 5 percent of schools statewide, regardless of Title I status, as well as any high school with a graduation rate under 60%. Under their MOUs, participating LEAs must undertake one of the four school intervention models in all Illinois Priority Schools within the LEA (an exception was made in Chicago, where it was deemed beyond the LEA's capacity to work with all of its Priority Schools on the same timeline as the rest of the State). The intervention must commence during the first three years of the RTTT grant period and with no less than a proportionate cohort of schools initiating interventions in each year. Participating LEAs that can demonstrate that a prior intervention substantially aligned with one of the four school intervention models is demonstrating significant achievement gains may receive funding to continue with that intervention. The performance metric targets are achievable. While they could be more ambitious in terms of the timeline for initiating one of the four school intervention models, they reflect the practical reality of needing to build up the existing capacity levels of the participating LEAs. The State's prior LEA interventions since 2004-2005 are detailed in full, with approach used and results and lessons learned.

Total	50	47	47
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8	8	

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

The State increased the level of its support for elementary, secondary, and public higher education from \$9.2 billion to \$9.5 billion, an increase of 1.7% of State revenues from FY2008 to FY2009. The State Aid formula has a mechanism to provide additional funding for the impact of poverty in the district. A separate supplemental grant is also calculated based on the district's poverty count. The School Code and State administrative rules require LEAs to undertake planning and budgeting processes to address equitable funding between high-poverty schools and other schools. The narrative demonstrates a strong commitment to education funding in the State.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	32	32
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Chicago is the only area of the State with a cap limiting the establishment of charter schools. With the passage of a recent law, Chicago now has a "high" cap of 70 schools, and under the cap, if filled, more than 10% of the 665 total public schools in the LEA would be charter schools. Thirty-nine charter schools currently operate in the State. The applicant provides a complete description of the State's approach to charter school accountability and authorization, with appropriate evidence. Charter school funding may not be less than 75% or more than 125% of the school district's per capita student tuition multiplied by the number of students residing in the district who are enrolled in the charter school. The statutory range for charter school funding (between 75% and 125% of an LEA's per capita student tuition) is very wide, and "medium points" were awarded for this element by this reader. In addition, the proportionate share of funds generated under Federal or State categorical aid programs are directed to charter schools serving students

eligible for that aid. The State makes funding available to charter schools for start-up costs through the Charter School Revolving Loan Fund and provides charter schools with assistance with facilities acquisition. The applicant made no mention of any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools. State law also authorizes contract schools, which are managed and operated by a for-profit or not-for-profit private entity retained by the LEA board.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	3	3	
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(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant highlights the State's Illinois Early Learning Council and the subsequent expansion of its Preschool for All program. This program and the Council help to ensure that children in the State are able to enter K-12 education ready to learn and more likely to make progress towards college readiness.

Total	55	43	43	
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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)

The applicant provides a comprehensive focus on the STEM disciplines throughout the application. The policies promoted by the State are aimed to integrate and vertically align with STEM standards at the elementary, middle, and secondary school levels. The application would establish a rigorous course of study in STEM for students within participating LEAs, establish "STEM Learning Exchanges" through public-private partnerships that will help to increase the number of effective teachers teaching in the STEM disciplines and by offering programs offering teachers real-world experience and increased math and science expertise.

Total	15	15	15	
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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)

This is an exceptional application—clear, well-organized, comprehensive, and detailed in how the applicant will use RTTT funds to implement significant reforms across all four education reform areas of the ARRA, as well as the State Success Factors Criteria.

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The State's application is a comprehensive effort to reform its K-12 education system on a timeline of several years. It commits to reforms across all four major areas of the ARRA. The State is ready to embark on these reforms, and at least some of them appear reliant on being awarded a RTTT grant. As an example, the State currently does not have a comprehensive data and information system or the ability to handle value-added issues. It is committed to such reforms, and ready to do so, but RTTT will enable them to start moving towards these goals, not help them cross the finish line on reforms that are well underway in these areas.

As noted throughout the Tier I review comments above, and confirmed by the State team presentation, several overarching issues may hamper the State's ability to effectively implement and achieve full anticipated results from the reforms in the application. These are caveats that stand out in terms of this reviewer's confidence in whether the State is sufficiently ready and capable to take full advantage of a RTTT grant.

First, as the State recognized upfront in its application and in its State presentation, the SEA and LEAs have limited capacity to implement these reforms at present, which is why the State's application focuses a great deal of attention on the use of external partnerships. This is an approach that is likely to help the SEA achieve greater success with implementation, but the State clearly continues to struggle with internal (and external) capacity. This lessens the confidence of this reviewer in whether there is a clear enough leadership structure to "own" the State's RTTT reforms and direct implementation from the SEA down to the classroom level. The State has committed to very aggressive goals, timeliness, and performance measures, and its plans are, for the most part, of high quality. The nagging question is whether the State is being too aggressive about its goals and too optimistic about the results it will achieve, given its own limited capacity and the limited capacity of its LEAs.

A second overarching issue is whether the lack of support from local teacher unions will hamper the ability of the State to implement reforms at the classroom level. The statewide teachers' unions are on board with RTTT, but responses in the State team presentation heightened this reviewer's concerns that teacher union commitment to RTTT may be shallow and perhaps largely confined to the statewide organizations, who have had seats at the table and been supportive partners with the State's leadership.

A third issue of concern is that the State is unwilling or unready to commit to teacher and evaluation systems being used for employment decisions. An advisory committee will consider these issues in the future, but the State has made no commitment to moving forward with these kinds of reforms.

In sum, the State has set forth a high-quality application and is committed to embarking on an aggressive reform agenda but needs the funds to do so. Several caveats remain as to whether the State is sufficiently ready to adopt the fullest range of education reforms aligned with RTTT policy priorities and has the capacity to implement these reforms at the highest level.

Total	0	0	
Grand Total	500	408	408



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Illinois Application #2520IL-4

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	56	54	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	40	38	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	11	11	

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

A1(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda - The applicant's reform agenda as outlined is ambitious but appropriate given the stated challenges, demonstrated commitment, consensus and broad base support of stakeholders. The goals are clearly articulated and aligned to the reform plans. A1(ii)(a) Terms and Scope -Strong statewide commitment to the reform agenda is evidenced by the 366 LEAs that have committed to participate in the RTTT Plan. The requirement that all participating LEAs implement all components of the plan and the establishment of the Super LEAs initiative, indicate the applicant's commitment to its goals and the implementation of its reform plan. Roles and responsibilities, recourse for non-performance and LEA expectations as outlined are clearly delineated. A1(ii)(b)Scope of Work - The scope of work for LEAs clearly describes plans which are aligned to the applicant's reform agenda and reflects the current foundation based on previous reforms. The two year period for LEAs to align curriculum and standards and implement formative assessments is an appropriate timeframe for the work, given the necessary steps and capacity building that will need to occur. A1(ii)(c) Signatures - The application reflects broad support from its local leaders as evidenced by the percentage of signatures of superintendents and board presidents. Less than 50% of local union leaders endorsed the reform agenda, which raises questions about the State's ability to implement far-reaching bold reforms A1(iii)Translating LEA participation into statewide impact - Broad statewide impact is evidenced by the percentage of LEAs participating in the RTTT Plan, representing 75% of the Illinois public school population throughout all regions of the State. The growth targets established for all students within the education goals can yield significant gains provided explicit benchmarks are established, however subgroup and gap reduction data were missing, resulting in an inability to determine alignment of goals to the data results.

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

(ii) Based on the presentation, limited strategies to engage the local unions in securing support for the reform agenda remains a concern. Significant buy-in regarding the implementation of the proposed initiatives can only occur when high levels of broad-based engagement exist. It appears that the primary focus for securing union support for the reform agenda remained at the State level.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	25	24	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	15	14	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10	

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

A2(i)(a)Providing strong leadership and dedicated teams - The applicant's commitment to building capacity for implementation of educational reform is evident by its involvement in many collaboratives, ie. State Collaborative for Great Teachers and Leaders and the Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium. This is an appropriate path to ensuring strong leadership that will lead to successful implementation of the reform agenda components. It is unclear from the application the key strategies that will be used to ensure a high level of capacity development internally as a result of the partnerships. A2(i)(b)Supporting participating LEAs in successfully implementing the education reform plans the State proposed-The redesign of the State Recognition Process is an appropriate and effective process for building the LEAs' knowledge base and capacity to implement rigorous improvement initiatives as outlined in the plan. It is appropriate that this system be aligned to the Measurement Plan as stated, however the process for identifying necessary interventions is unclear. A2(i)(c)Providing effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing its RTTT grant - The applicant reflects a thorough understanding of the need for effective and efficient operations and oversight as evidenced by the development of the Measurement Plan system and the oversight strategies of utilizing regionally-based CPA firms for fiscal monitoring. The plan does not explicitly address the actual reporting structures and systems that will be needed in utilizing a regional approach to the monitoring and oversight responsibilities. A2(i)(d) Using funds for the grant -The budget reflects realistic allocations aligned to the proposed RTTT reform plans, given the expected outcomes of each of the reform components. The reform agenda plan clearly articulates the leveraging of the federal, State and outside funds for implementation of the reform plan. The allocation of funds for the Super LEAs, designed to bring unions and districts together to accelerate reform, proved to be successful as evidenced by the commitment of twelve LEAs to become Super LEAs. A2(i)(e) The application provides significant evidence of the State's ability to sustain reforms after the funding period as outlined in the key legislation passed related to reform and funding, and the statewide coalition's focus of keeping reform at the top of the Illinois policy agenda. A2(ii)(a)Use support from a broad group of stakeholders, The State's teachers and principals - Significant support exists to implement the reform agenda as evidenced by the comprehensive process of engagement that resulted in securing support from a a broad range of stakeholders, including State Union leadership from both unions and principals' organizations. It is unclear, however to what extent the State union leadership will work with its local unions to support them and to increase commitment among those unions who have not endorsed the RTTT application. A2(ii)(b)Other critical stakeholders -The applicant has exhibited broad support from organizations, community, and business. It is evident that an infrastructure to support the reform work throughout the process with stakeholders exists due to the coalition of the eighteen community-based foundations formed "Race To The Top Initiatives". It is unclear from the application whether a communication strategy will be implemented to keep the stakeholders engaged and the public aware of the progress of the reform work.

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

The ability to ensure internal capacity building and sustainability remains a concern. A strategic plan for ensuring internal develop as the State works with its external partners in each of the four reform areas will be critical in the overall sustainability of the reform agenda.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	18	18	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	13	13	

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

A3(i)Making progress over the past years - It is evident that the State has been engaged in ongoing reform work aligned to the four education reform areas as indicated by participation in such organizations and initiatives as Common International Standards, MOSAIC, Illinois College and Work Readiness, America Diploma Project and Partnership for 21st Century Skills State Leadership Network. A3(ii)Improve Student Outcomes since 2003 -The review of the data reflects mixed achievement according to NAEP, ISAT AND PSAE. While the data reflects improvement, there is significant disparity in gains among subgroups. The

applicant highlights gains made in reading, math, graduation rates and AP Examinations, however fails to provide a thorough analysis of the data, specifically outlining the specific actions that contributed to the gains. An analysis of the achievement gaps, Students with Disabilities and high school graduation rates are examples of unclear or missing data.

Total	125	99	96	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Int
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	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)

B1(i)(a) and (b)Participating in a consortium; Significant number of states-The signed MOU indicates the State's participation in the Common Core State Standards Consortium with forty-eight states. B1(ii) Commitment to adopting a common set of K12 Standards by August, 2, 2010 -The applicant is committed to adopting a common set of K12 standards by August 2, 2010 as evidenced by the State's legal timeline and process.

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

10	10	10	
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

B2(i)and (ii)Commitment to improving the quality of its assessments by working jointly and with a significant number of states - Applicant demonstrates commitment to improving the quality of its assessments as evidenced by its participation in MOSAIC with a significant number of states-twenty six states.

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

20	18	18	
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

B3 Supporting the transition to enhanced standard and high quality assessments - The State's plan of action to transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments is rigorous and reflects an understanding of the complexity of the work as evidenced by the action framework and two-year timeline. The key activities as outlined by the two goals are appropriate given the broader reform agenda plans. The implementation plan effectively develops collaboratives with public and private partners, particularly in the establishment of the STEM Learning Exchanges. The application is unclear as it relates to the broad and strategic capacity building that will be necessary throughout the system - from the classroom to the State level, to ensure successful transition and implementation. The application is unclear as to what systematic support the LEAs should expect from the State. Although the application refers to a statewide network of partners for delivering high quality instructional resources, it is unclear as to how the partners will be selected and its model of service. It is unclear whether a mechanism for a systemic assessment of the progress and a vehicle for course correction throughout the process exist. It is unclear whether a broad base communication strategy will be developed to inform the community.

Total	70	68	68	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	20	20	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
C1 Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system- The State provided evidence of elementing ten America COMPETES elements.				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
C2 Accessing and using State data-The State is engaged in key activities to develop and augment reporting tools to make data accessible to key stakeholders as evidenced by the descriptions of several initiatives, ie. Illinois Interactive Report Card and High School-to-College. The formation of the Illinois Collaborative for Education Policy Research is an appropriate and effective initiative to ensure the use of data to support State policymaking and continuous improvement.				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	15	15	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
C3(i)Increase the acquisition, adoption and use of local instructional improvement systems- The potential to improve instruction utilizing the Learning and Performance Management System can be achieved provided practitioners are engaged in the leadership and capacity building of the process. Teacher and principal leaders can provide useful feedback and input throughout the development stages. It was unclear as to whether teachers and principal leaders will have a role in the development stages. C3(ii)Support participating LEAs and schools that are using instructional improvement systems - The applicant's plan for professional development in the use of the systems to support instructional improvement is clearly articulated and appropriate. It reflects best practices such as establishing site-based leadership teams and trainer of trainers models. The practices will provide staffs with ongoing support and coaching. The expectations for the site-based leaders have not been delineated, ie. time commitment, support processes for site leaders. It is unclear as to what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of the professional development. C3(iii)Make the data from instructional improvement system available and accessible to researchers - The plans outline the availability and accessibility to researchers as evidenced by the capacity of ICEPR. However, the plan does not address how the data findings from the researchers will be used to inform instructional practices and school reform.				
Total	47	40	40	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	19	19	
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
D1 Providing high quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals- The State allows for alternative routes to certification through legal, statutory and regulatory provisions as evidenced by the programs and descriptions as outlined in the plan. It is evident that the State monitors and identifies supply and demand and shortage areas as per legal requirements and utilizes the report to inform decision making regarding the preparation to fill positions.				

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	54	54
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	13	13
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	9	9
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	27	27

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

D2(i) Establishing clear approaches to measuring student growth - The applicant has clearly articulated a systematic approach to measuring growth using multiple measures as evidenced by the redesigned Illinois evaluation system. In developing parameters for the measures, it is appropriate to collaborate with teachers, principals, teacher unions and experts as outlined to build capacity, support and ownership. D2(ii) Design and implement rigorous and fair evaluation systems - The applicant has developed a high quality, rigorous plan for the development of a fair, transparent evaluation system as evidenced by the new State Performance Evaluation Reform Act, PERA. The plan is aggressive and systematic, engages stakeholders in the process, outlines phases, and builds from a foundation of best practices, i.e. using data from the LEAs strong practices such as the work from The Danielson Framework for Teaching. The statewide approach to establishing common frameworks for measuring teacher and principal professional practice is critical to the alignment and coherence of common standards implementation. Although the plan explicitly outlines the actions that will be taken and the stakeholders involved, the selection process of participants, expectations of time, frequency and structures for accomplishing the work are unclear. The action plans adequately reflect and are aligned to the challenges discussed in the plan. D2(iii) Annual evaluations of teachers and principals that include meaningful feedback and provides for student growth data are major components as evidenced by the PERA Act. The system effectively provides for short term and long term benchmarks of implementation throughout the life of the RTTT grant. A comprehensive outline of the evaluation framework, such as the required number of evaluations for all cohorts is included in the plan. Although the criteria requires that evaluations be conducted annually, the State's plan requires evaluation of tenured teachers every two years. D2(iv) Use of evaluations to inform decisions - The application explicitly outlines the use of evaluations to inform decisions as outlined in PERA. The applicant clearly articulates its expectations for the use of evaluations to impact education improvement and decisions about professional development, certification, promotion, compensation, tenure and dismissal. The initiatives aligned to this goal are coherent and rigorous. The plan explicitly outlines the use of evaluation data to inform and implement best practices such as professional development plans, district allocations and instructional coaches. As evidenced by the applicant's reform agenda, the passing of PERA, provisions exist for granting tenure or full certification and removing ineffective teachers and principals.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	21	21
(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)

D3(i) Ensuring equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and principals. The application provides a thorough plan for ensuring equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and principals in high poverty and or high minority schools as evidenced by the implementation of key metrics on the Educator Effectiveness Scorecards, a primary outcome of the Measurement Plan. The plan also outlines strategic and effective activities to improve the overall workforce. While the appropriate tools have been designed, annual targets have not been set to ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers. The plan is unclear

as to how ineffective teachers will be moved out of the system. D3(ii) Increase the number of and percentage of effective teachers teaching in hard-to staff areas-The plan provides for an effective use of incentives as evidenced by the agreements between the Super LEAs and their unions. The reform agenda provides for an appropriate level of incentives for recruitment such as the establishment of the STEM teacher interns and establishing autonomy for the leadership to select and assign teachers. However the State does not outline its process for setting annual targets for the hard-to-staff subjects, ie. math and science. Baseline data should be established so that appropriate annual targets are reflected in the plan.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	11	11
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D4 Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs-The reform agenda's plan to utilize working groups of stakeholders and the National Council on Teacher Quality to address the linkage of student achievement data to credentialing preparation programs, is a high-impact strategy that is appropriate, as it creates a standard and alignment to ensure high quality teaching as a result of highly qualified programs as measured by student growth. The plan does not describe the criteria for the selection of team members and the representative groups as outlined in the plan. The timeline included is appropriate given the complexity of the outcomes and work. The applicant thoroughly explains how the data will be utilized to expand opportunities by establishing placement sites in Illinois Priority Schools for preservice teachers and principals as outlined in the plan. It is unclear as to the extent of capacity building that will be needed to implement the plan. The plan focused more on the linkage to teacher-student performance than on principal-student performance.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	18	18
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D5 Providing effective support to teachers and principals- The plan as outlined provides a clearly articulated roadmap for providing data informed professional development systems. The activities and supports planned are appropriate and effective in increasing capacity, integrating best practices and ensuring quality, through mentoring and coaching. It is unclear how the mentors, coaches and technical assistance staff will be selected. Mentor standards are cited, however it is unclear whether these standards have been developed or will need to be developed. The issue of time; for example common planning, job embedded strategies, is a consideration for implementation. Accountability for all of the initiatives have been explicitly outlined. Implemented as designed can yield important feedback for ensuring the implementation of effective practices.

Total	138	123	123
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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	

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

E1 The State has the legal authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5

(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

E2(i)The applicant's reform agenda identified the persistently lowest achieving schools as the Illinois Priority Schools. E2(ii)The reform agenda outlines a robust plan to transform its persistently lowest-achieving schools utilizing all four school intervention models. Comprehensive criteria, targeted initiatives,supports and accountability systems have been established. The timeline for planning and implementation is ambitious given the complexity of the decisions and necessary steps. It is unclear from the application whether the Center for School Improvement will have oversight responsibilities for all Illinois Priority Schools.

Total	50	50	50
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	

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

The percentage of revenues available to the State and used for education increased.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	38	38	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit increasing the number of high performing charter schools. The State has laws regarding the authorization of charter schools and has provisions for closing the ineffective ones. The State provides for equitable funding compared to traditional schools is unclear based on the percentage range referenced in the plan. The State provides for facilities agreements

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
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(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State has had a focus on Early Childhood for many years. The 2003 Early Learning Council was established to ensure effective statewide initiatives to support Pre-K programs. Rigorous certification requirements are in place for Pre-K teachers. The State will be aligning the Common Core Standards with early childhood standards and expectations. Focused attention on the transition grades are resulting in the development and implementation of comprehensive practices and initiatives to ensure student success.

Total	55	53	53
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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)

The State's reform agenda will create STEM Learning Exchanges throughout the State.

Total	15	15	15
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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)

The applicant has met the criteria of the Absolute Priority as evidenced by its highly ambitious, rigorous but achievable reform agenda. The applicant addressed all four reform areas in a comprehensive plan which builds from a foundation of previous dramatic reform efforts, evidenced based research, best practices, a comprehensive statewide engagement of stakeholders, broad base support, and policies enacted to ensure a high quality education system for all of its students to graduate prepared for college and the workforce.

Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	448	445	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Illinois Application #252OIL-5

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	60	60	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	43	43	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	

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

A 1 i Illinois has established four goals: • to inject into classrooms effective tools and instructional systems that will empower educators to improve student outcomes; • to provide useable feedback to educators and hold them accountable for student outcomes; • to increase capacity and concentrate it and intensive supports on the lowest-performing schools; and • to focus on high schools and the transition to and from them. The State not only clearly articulated its goals and paths to achieve them; it candidly gave background reasons why these particular goals were set. A 1.ii Illinois gained the support of the superintendents of 366 LEA's and they represent 74% of the total Illinois public school population and 81% of its total low-income student population. For its state plan and the Memorandum of Understanding, Illinois obtained 100% of the signatures of participating LEA superintendents, 75% of the school board presidents but just 32% of the local union leaders. It received 100% support from all the participating LEA's for all the elements of the plan. Examples of LEA's commitment to the Illinois improvement plan include: • Redesigning local performance evaluation systems for teachers and principals with at least 50% of the evaluations based on student growth; • For those with one or more high-poverty or high minority schools, performing a comprehensive review of institutional policies and constraints that may prevent such schools from attracting high quality teachers; and • Entering into data sharing agreements with a new State research collaborative that will increase the ability of LEA's to support policy research. In addition, Illinois has created "Super LEAs" - 12 LEA's representing 25 Illinois Priority Schools with 128,000 students where both the superintendent and the union leaders have agreed to "bigger, bolder, faster" reforms by: • implementing new evaluation systems one year before other participating LEA's; • providing staffing autonomy to the site-based leadership of Priority Schools to enable them to establish an effective teaching staff as soon as possible, meaning that vacancies can be filled at the discretion of school leadership and staff can be relocated through involuntary transfers; and • participating in the comprehensive state intervention framework, the Illinois Partnership Zone. Illinois has managed to secure the strong commitment of LEA's that represent three-quarters of its students, but the fact remains that less than one-third of the union leaders in these districts signed on causing some concern about the ease of implementation of the proposed reforms. A 1 iii While the percentage of LEA's agreeing to participate in the RTT applications is less than half, the number that signed on represents 74% of its students and 81% of its students in poverty and further, these districts are geographically distributed all over the state. Illinois also defined specific percentages of passage rates for each grade level and sub group for each year through 2014 not only on the state tests and NAEP in English and math, but also on the PSAE and ACT as well as percentage increases in the high-school graduation rate and college enrollments. Attention to, and reporting on, such expected specific increases should enhance statewide impact. However what is lacking and what was specifically requested is any indication of percentages of participating LEAs, schools or students the State

expects to be involved in achieving these passage rates, causing concern that statewide impact may not be so easily achievable.

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

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

A 2 i Illinois has provided rich evidence that it will be able to build strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain all aspects of its proposed plans. A few nuggets: The State's major education policy makers provided the leadership to succeed in reforms over this past year in: • Getting a series of landmark education reform bills passed to: a) raise the State's charter school cap; b) establish a P-20 Council and a framework for its Longitudinal Educational Data System; c) permit non-institutions of higher learning to sponsor for alternative certification programs; and d) overhaul teacher and principal evaluation systems. • The State Department working with key agencies to create the capacity to implement meaningful reform and switching from trying to directly provide services to relying on and managing regional delivery systems and supporting participating LEAs by partnering with civic and business community representatives to launch STEM Learning Exchanges; • Being able to draw on national expertise through its participation in several multi-state collaborations such as the State Collaborative for Great Teachers and Leaders that supports the adoption of policies that will improve teacher and leader effectiveness. • Aligning its plan with state and federal priorities to increase the likelihood of continued funding. Illinois examined the task before it and defined the critical components and performance measures it would need for the LEA's and the state to succeed in accomplishing it. It then developed a "Measurement Plan" that will track and inform progress. It will use data from this plan to inform decisions at the state and local level and compare Illinois' overall performance to that of other states. Part of this Plan will be the development of School-level Educator Effectiveness Scorecards that will publicly report on Participating LEA's progress on implementing teacher and principal reforms. Thus the State will model data collecting and use of it as well as the accountability it seeks. To support LEA's, the State will revamp its accreditation method from one of checking off elements of performance – a compliance exercise - to one of in-depth analysis of the LEA's capacity to effectively improve its performance. In return, districts must agree to more rigorous standards and documenting results of improvement efforts. For Participating LEA's, there will be an additional focus on their progress in implementing RTT reforms which should result in their aligning their resources to RTT reforms as well as ceasing ineffective practices (a much needed step, but one extremely difficult for districts to take). It has also included in its budget funding for specifics necessary for the Participating LEA's to reach the goals, the expenditure of which should have an impact statewide. It has budgeted funds for example for: Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to promote Pre-k-3 Instructional alignment; Principal Mentoring Expansion and a National Career Readiness Certificate Program. Further it has included funding for non- LEA partners for STEM Learning Exchanges, College and Career Readiness and Dropout Prevention and Reenrollment, extending outreach and further ensuring statewide impact. A 2 ii Illinois involved a broad range of stakeholders from the earliest possible stage, posting on its website the RTT planning document and inviting feedback. It held hearings and engaged various stakeholders some of whom volunteered to help develop solutions. Letters of support came from various organizations including both teachers' unions. A coalition of 18 national, state and community-based foundations formed a fund to support the effort. Two of the foundations paid for or loaned staff to help with the application and the foundation community is now interested in funding aspects of the plan. While Illinois did not receive support from all stakeholders, it has vowed to continue to reach out to them in the hopes that strong support will evolve, no doubt in part because of the dire need for reform but also because of the thoughtful, rational plan agreed upon. One supporter summed up the purpose and support of the effort well: These reforms will transform the state's schools, replacing an input-driven, compliance-focused system that is failing with an outcome-based, results - oriented system that helps prepare every child in the state to be world-ready.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	20	20
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	16	16

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

A 3 i To demonstrate that it has made progress in recent years on the four reform areas and used a combination of federal and state funding to do so, Illinois cites the various partnerships it has been working in – The Illinois College and Work Readiness Partnership, the American Diploma Project and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills State Leadership Network – and what has been accomplished, especially with improving Illinois' standards and assessments. The State lists awards it has received such as the ACT Systems of Excellence Award honoring states that have made significant progress toward improving students college and career readiness and The Data Quality Campaign's 2009 Leadership Award for its progress on establishing a high-quality longitudinal data system. It cites the Illinois' state board's intensive interventions with low-performing districts, charter school reform and new teacher induction and mentoring. What is not included in its accomplishments was any past efforts to recruit highly qualified teachers or place them in the lowest-performing school districts. The proposal is also weak on explaining the use of other federal funds for reforms. A 3 ii Illinois' record of improving student outcomes is a mixed bag. Its scores on the ISAT overall show significant increases and decreases in various sub-group gaps. On NAEP, there was strong improvement in reading in grades 4 and 8, but none for grade 4 math and a significant decrease for grade 8 math. On the PSAE, a two-day test, the results showed no increase in reading and a decrease in math. Illinois incorporates the ACT in the PSAE and since it began doing that ACT scores have increased in all four subject areas and across all racial/ethnic groups. Average composite scores have increased at a rate twice that of students nationally. Illinois' graduation rates have remained essentially steady for all groups but improved considerably for low-income and black students. There was a 1.1% increase from 2007-8 to 2008-9, but no rate reported for 2008-2009.

Total	125	110	110
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	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 Illinois has fully met this criterion. B 1 ii Illinois has fully met this criterion.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

B 2 Illinois has made an outstanding effort in regard to this criterion. It has joined with five consortia – WIDA, MOSAIC, SMARTER, Achieve Consortium and Florida Consortium - to develop high-quality assessments with each one aligned with the Common Core Standards while having a different, but valid focus. Among them, in addition to summative assessments, they will provide: 1. benchmark and curriculum-embedded assessments 2. ones measuring higher-order skills 3. online assessments for efficiency of delivery and scoring that can include adaptive testing and the results of which will be available two weeks

after they are administered 4. internationally benchmarked, formative and interim assessments 5. selected-response, constructed response and performance components aimed at higher order skills 6. more rigorous and analytic multiple-choice and open ended items. Members of one consortium will report student achievement benchmarked to a variety of other achievement standards.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20	
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

B 3 Illinois has thoroughly addressed how it will support the implementation of enhanced standards and high-quality assessments so that it can have them into the classrooms of every student by the end of the second year of the grant period. It has established an action framework that includes a timeline and assigns responsibilities clearly showing what the state will be responsible for and what the LEA's will be tasked with. Illinois has a firm grasp on the supports and programs that will be needed to carry out their ambitious plan and includes everything from providing participating LEA's with a kindergarten readiness measure that will be aligned with early learning programs and professional development to validating students' readiness for the workplace and backmapping from a standardized ACT score to make sure students are on track for postsecondary coursework. The state will also make a substantial investment in developing an approach to K-12 STEM education and establish STEM Learning Exchanges, partnerships with public and private entities to expand STEM opportunities.

Total	70	70	70	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

C 1 Illinois has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all but two of American COMPETES elements.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

C 2 Illinois' plan regarding its longitudinal data system is a high-quality one as it will have several tools to make the data accessible such as an interactive report card that makes test results and accountability information public and it will establish a collaborative for education policy research that will among other things, assist practitioners in developing research capacity for data collection and analysis. It will also provide data to inform implementation and evaluation of the state's new teacher and principal evaluations.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	12	12	
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(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

C 3 While Illinois proposes a somewhat different approach from having all Participating LEA's implement instructional improvement systems individually, it does intend that they do in that LEA's will be able to access data readily in the system the state will set up in which the LEA's and the State will partner. Practitioners will receive training in how to use the systems through Illinois' STATEwide System of Support. The proposal is somewhat confusing about giving researchers access to the data. It states that researchers are capable of making research more useable, but it does not state that they may have the data to use. Rather it seems to imply that the focus, at least in the first two years, will be on building LEA capacity to support research activities.

Total	47	37	37
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

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

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

D 1 Illinois has three alternative routes to certification for teachers (preparing 672 teachers in 2008-9) and three for administrators (preparing 38 in 2008-2009) and fulfills the other requirements to meet this criterion.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	51	51	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	3	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5	5	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	28	28	

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

D 2 i Illinois will develop state-wide K-12 growth measures using new assessments aligned with Common Core standards no later than 2013-2014 and earlier if possible, but it did not include that its approach would measure student growth for each individual student. As Illinois elected to insert verbatim the section from its Illinois Reform Plan pertaining to this sub criterion rather than quoting from it to specifically address the sub point, making it difficult to find the required evidence, it's possible that somewhere in the submission, this stipulation was addressed, but this reviewer could not find it. D 2 ii Illinois' plan emphasizes training of evaluators, informing teachers and principals about the need for and process of developing a new evaluation system and the State's responsibility in delivering one. The State Board will require LEAs to demonstrate how the evaluation systems will be designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement. Earlier, it explained that it will join with other states and use an expert organization to help develop a new system, D2 iii While Illinois includes "Timely and Constructive Feedback" in a heading, it does not develop how that will occur except to say that a post-observation conference will be held. D 2 iv Illinois has covered all the bases here and demonstrates that it fully understands the barriers involved in carrying out this reform. It waffles a bit when it says that it will "consider" a legislative change to statutorily tie poor evaluation ratings to the dismissal of tenured teachers, but it's confident that that will occur by 2013-2014. There are several really strong aspects to its approach: The Super LEA's will be "out front" determining what changes need to be made and then this information will be widely shared with all stakeholders, awareness lending support for reform. Their partnership in the multi-state collaborative should prove very helpful, not only because "misery loves company" but also because the pooling of information and intellectual resources will expedite the work and lend support to the effort. In addition, the State Superintendent of Schools in Illinois has the authority to initiate the suspension or revocation of an educator's certificate for "incompetency" and with the evaluation system improvements, he/she will be able to initiate action more consistently and prevent educators from moving from district to district without improving performance, continuing to have a deleterious effect on students.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	21	21	
(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
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(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 3 i Illinois' plan includes the realization that it has to have better information on the disparities in educator effectiveness before it can be certain that it can equitably distribute effective teachers and principals. Its plan includes, in the short term, relying on a research-based index of teacher "academic capital" developed by the Illinois Education Research Council and relying on LEA's to report proxy measures of effectiveness. One of the outcomes of Illinois' Measurement Plan will be to use appropriate data collected by the State and IEES to address key human capital metrics and to establish State-, LEA- and School-level Educator Effectiveness Scorecards. These scorecards will include an Index of Teacher Academic Capital that statistically combines teacher-level attributes that research indicates are linked to student achievement such as basic skills test performance and ACT scores. Its plan also calls for an Ensuring Effective Educators for All Schools Program to be established. What the plan does not include is the establishment of any targets by which it expected to accomplish any of the stated goals, causing some concern about the degree of urgency or seriousness that exists regarding this effort. D3 ii Illinois' plan for finding effective teachers for hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas includes supporting the development of STEM externships for teachers with prior record of effectiveness so that they can experience real world subject-matter application, enhance technology skills and bring career awareness back to the classroom. It will also expand its existing Illinois Mathematics and Science Partnership Program to increase math and science expertise of Participating LEAs' teachers. It will fund the expansion of the Teacher Tuition Waiver program that encourages current teachers and academically talented student to pursue careers in special education. The plan also calls for making the current Bilingual Transition-to-Teaching program more convenient and affordable. Online coursework and more intensive paths that can expedite certification will be explored and developed and one could assume in collaboration with participating LEAs, but that is not clear in the evidence presented. Further, no baseline data is included from which increased numbers or percentages were estimated to be able to measure progress.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	8	8
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 4 i Illinois' plan to improve teacher and principal effectiveness includes a qualitative, comprehensive assessment of 49 of Illinois' teacher preparation programs by the National Council on Teacher Quality, the first in the nation to do such a deep and wide analysis of teacher preparation programs. It will evaluate programs on 25 criteria including coursework, selectivity and field experiences and outcomes, but linkage to student growth was not mentioned. However, beginning in 2011-12, the State will establish a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students and that information will be linked to the in-state teacher-preparation programs. The proposal wasn't as strong on linking principal data to the preparation programs, but both teacher and principal working teams are to provide recommendations on public reporting mechanisms based on the linkage of student growth data to credentialing programs. In addition, no later than 2013-2014, reporting mechanisms will be established that link student achievement and student growth data to each credentialing program in the state. D 4 ii The proposal did not address the expansion of credentialing options.

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

In Tier 2 , it was clarified that even though the proposal's description of the NCTQ evaluation of 49 state preparation programs did not list student growth as an aspect to be evaluated, student growth will indeed be linked to the evaluations of state teacher preparation programs.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	12	12
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 5 The proposal is very weak on how it plans to improve professional development. It seems to focus on mentoring and whether or not practitioners participated in any, not what kinds should be offered or how it would be made available, whether there will be opportunities for collaboration, etc. It stated only that Participating LEA's would be required to establish and use indicators for measuring professional development effectiveness.

Total	138	113	113	
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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	

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

E i Illinois does have the legal authority to intervene with low-performing schools.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

E 2 i Illinois identifies persistently low-performing schools based on certain criteria such as their being in the lowest 5% of student achievement statewide or having a graduation rate of less than 60%. Identified schools are Illinois Priority Schools. E 2 ii Illinois has developed an elaborate support system for turning around lowest achieving schools, forcefully addressing why the schools are underperforming and tackling all aspects (e.g., the drop out rate and the elementary and middle schools that feed into Priority Schools) and clearly ascertaining just what it will take to successfully reorganize particular schools, presumably individualizing approaches accordingly.

Total	50	50	50	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	

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

F 1 Illinois increased its funding for education by 1.7%.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	34	34	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

F 2 i Illinois did not raise its cap on charter schools until last year. Considering that the state has 3910 public schools, roughly 3400 outside of Chicago (that now has a high cap), doubling the cap to 120 means that it allows less than five percent of its schools to be chartered. F2ii Illinois requirements for charter schools to be authorized are quite thorough. To be approved, applicants must include in their proposals goals, curriculum, pupil performance standards, assessments, proof that the school will be economically sound

and the governance/operating structure. Applicants must also agree to set rigorous achievement standards and plans to achieve them and agree to enroll a substantial number of at-risk students. The State has closed some schools. F2iii Charter Schools receive equitable funding and also funds for start-up costs. F2iv Illinois also provides funds for school construction and related expenses. F2v Illinois does authorize innovative schools in the form of contract schools.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
F 3 Illinois has been a leader in recognizing the importance of early childhood development and education for later academic success. In 2003, it created the Early Learning Council and then expanded its Preschool for All program. Also, Illinois serves a higher percentage of 3-year olds than any other state and has extensive services for infants and toddlers. In addition, Illinois requires its preschool teachers to have Bachelor of Arts degrees, specialized training and certification. Illinois will begin designing a linked Multi-agency early learning data system and these efforts will, by law, be connected to the longitudinal data system. Illinois' preschool programs have learning standards and those will be realigned with the new Common Core Standards being adopted.				
Total	55	49	49	

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)				
Illinois has met this priority.				
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)				
Illinois has fully addressed all four areas.				
Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	444	444	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Illinois Application #2520



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	55	55	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4	4	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	40	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	11	11	

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

The State's application includes a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that aligns with the education areas in the ARRA, with the exception of "recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most." Section (A)(1) does not include a comprehensive vision for teachers and principals, in particular how the State will recruit and reward this group. This omission has the potential to create human capital challenges as the State pursues its strategy to place qualified teachers in high-need areas. The State's LEA partnerships represent more than 80% of all impoverished Illinois students. This is significant and ensures the proposed plan has statewide impact and reach, and provides the State's historically underperforming segment (as illustrated by the State's NAEP scores) additional resources and supports. The innovative Super LEA concept further illustrates the State-LEA commitment to piloting (and, when possible, scaling up) new models increasing student achievement and transforming schools. The State's scope of work description is consistent, if not identical, to the Department's proposed MOU. Every participating LEA, sans CPS, agreed to every element of the state's reform agenda. This is impressive. The State's decision to deviate from their standard MOU in accepting a revised MOU from CPS creates inconsistency between the plan's goals and policy actions in two ways: 1) CPS has limited capacity to "effectively intervene" in every underperforming school (as defined in the State's standard MOU); however, the revised MOU does not build district capacity. The revised MOU reduces the district's scope of eligible schools; effectively shutting out a significant number of schools in need (as defined in the State's standard MOU), and 2) The revised MOU allows CPS to use a state assessment that the State's plan describes as a "catastrophic failure" as "the sole measure of student growth." The State's plan is endorsed by every LEA Superintendent, and 3 out of every 4 participating School Board President has signed on. IFT's letter endorsing the state's plan reveals strong reservations about the state's plan and may reflect/foreshadow a lack of teacher buy-in, possibly a significant stumbling block to successful plan implementation. The State proposes significant improvements in student achievement state-wide and among sub-groups. The goal is plausible since participating LEAs serve 3/4 of all students in the state and more than 80% of students in poverty. The participating districts are distributed across the state, which ensures, if successful, the plan will literally impact students across the state. The state's plan clearly illustrates with or without RttT funds dramatic gains in student achievement are possible and likely to happen, albeit at a slower pace. The anticipated outcomes, however, do not significantly decrease achievement gaps. RttT funds, according to the plan, will produce the following gains at the end of the grant cycle: low-income students will achieve in math and reading at levels slightly less than the state's average 7 years prior. In other words, the State will close the achievement gap in reading one percentage point a year and in math the gap will remain. The narrative does not include a plan or discussion of the State's vision increasing Hispanic and Black subgroups. The plan does not provide narrative, but does

include data that shows an increase in high school graduation. The plan illustrates college enrollment as percentage increases from year to year; consequently, it is impossible to determine the State's current enrollment rate/estimate, which is necessary to evaluate the plan's viability for increasing college enrollment. Also, the plan does not include a strategy for increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit. The plan's proposal to close the achievement group is not aligned to its vision for college and workforce ready graduates. For example, the percent of Hispanic students meeting the reading CRB benchmark at the end of the grant period is 49%, 12 points lower than the state average. This may have the unintended consequence of more Hispanic students scoring at or above basic on state assessments, graduating from high school, and enrolling in college unprepared for college level course work.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	23	23
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	15	15
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8

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

The state's plan lacks an accountability framework and does not provide a clear articulation of the agency, team, or champion that will ultimately "own" the reform elements. ISBE has limited capacity to implement, yet the plan does not discuss a strategy for directly building ISBE's capacity. While the state's strategic focus on collaboration will increase stakeholder engagement, these groups lack authority e.g., the P-20 Council plays an advisory role, and may further exacerbate ISBE's human capital needs. In other words, the limited capacity that is driving the state to seek partnerships may be similar to those capacity challenges that would affect the state's ability to manage key reforms handled by groups, organizations, and coalitions. The State's proposal effectively outlines a strategy determining LEA capacity and evaluating which districts are improving student achievement and which are not. The Measurement Plan is smart policy as well as an artful attempt to connect state resources with local priorities. The state's decision to partner with AdvancedED is consistent with the state's collaboration strategy, and the establishment of a Center for School Improvement could be well-suited to disseminate effective best practices statewide. The State addresses its capacity challenges through a partnerships strategy, yet the proposal does not include a framework for deciding which initiatives the State can/should provide and what should be given to other groups, who will operate outside of ISBE. This framework is important in determining the plan's viability. The State has invested "significant agency resources" in shoring up its grant management system. The State is budgeting smart; maximizing the potential impact of RttT by combining dollars with a "significant amount of its SEA budget allocation" and using said funds to incent reform. The decision seems both strategic and practical. The major expenditures, outlined in the proposal, are consistent with the State's plan for driving reform and improving achievement. The State's plan has strong board support among key stakeholder groups, although the level of support from IFT (and other teachers unions) is an outstanding question. The short-term collaborative fund seeks to provide support during the initial stages of the grant period; however, the section does not address how the community of foundations will support education reform after the period of RttT funding has ended. The plan does include support letters from state and local leaders within the business, civil rights, education, and other community organizations; and institutions of higher education. The plan does not include support letters from the state's legislative leadership, charter school authorizers, and state charter school membership associations, tribal schools, parents or students.

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

(A)(2) asks reviewers to determine the State's ability and plan for building strong statewide capacity to implement its reform agenda. The State does not articulate a strategy or describe a plan for increasing its ability to implement and manage the State's reform efforts; instead, implementation is carried out by regional and local teams through various state agencies. This is a significant weakness here and throughout the proposal because the state not only is attempting to build its capacity - it's attempting to build its plan. In other words, the State plans to hold off on creating many of its performance measures, (D)(3)(i) for example, until the system for measurement has been developed for which the state is also seeking RttT funding. The State may be attempting to do too much, with too little time, and too little human capital. The

State's proposal and presentation did not inspire confidence that it can simultaneously and/or in tandem develop its data system, create assessments, implement new standards, revise its teacher and principal evaluation, to name a few, within the early stages of the grant's cycle.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	20	20	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	3	3	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	17	17	

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

The State has a track record of improving standards and supporting and mentoring new teachers. The State has recently focused on improving data systems. The section does not discuss the State's efforts turning around low performing schools or supporting school leaders. The State's elementary students demonstrate progressively better NAEP scores each year, and student achievement among 8th varies from significant change, minimal change, or no change. Low-income 8th graders and 4th graders perform at levels significantly lower than the state average on reading and math. The high school graduation gains have been modest - a 1.1% increase since 2003. In fact, the State has not made significant progress closing the achievement gap between the State and students of color and those in poverty. The State does not discuss the mismanagement of its state assessment and the affect is may have on its data.

Total	125	98	98	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	38	38	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	18	18	

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

The State's participation in the Common Core State Standards Initiative led by NGA's Center for Best Practices, CCSSO, and other organizations, and subsequent "Timeline for Adoption of Common Core Standards" is evidence they are working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards that are supported by evidence that they are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation. According to the state's plan, the Common Core State Standards Initiative is supported by practically every state (48 states, 2 territories, and the District of Columbia). The State has included a best-case-scenario timeline for adopting the Common Core Standards in Math and English by August 2, 2010. If the state's assumptions are incorrect, the timeline for standard's adoption will be affected. The plan does not provide a "what if" scenario or strategies to mitigate delay. Also, the plan does not discuss how, if and/or when the standards are adopted, they will be implemented in a well-planned way.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State is participating in multiple consortia and will "focus significantly on the Florida Consortium", which is collectively developing internally-benchmarked summative, formative, benchmark, and interim assessment. Every consortium included in the state's proposal plans to adopt the Common Core Standards.

While this ensures the state's standards and assessments are aligned, the participation in multiple consortia may have the unintended consequence of reducing the state's ability to establish common high-quality assessments. The plan describes the Florida Consortium as their lead partner; the consortium is supported by 17 states. The State also participates in the Balanced Consortium, which includes 36 states.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	18	18	
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state's plan for participating LEAs outlines a clear set of actions to establish and accelerate local instructional systems to implement the state's standards. Further, the state's high school reform plan builds on existing programs producing results and offers promising new programs, thus providing a clear vision and actions for ensuring instruction and assessment is driven by meaningful college and career readiness standards. The plan has high potential to transform the state's high school graduation and increase college readiness. The state's plan smartly balances SEA-LEA responsibility by having the SEA create the standards and the LEA develop the curriculum. However, the state's central strategies, 1) establishing an action framework and 2) providing LEAs with comprehensive State supports, will be executed through a proposed new program. Given the state's capacity challenge, it is unclear how the state will develop necessary capacity to execute their plan with a high degree of precision.

Total	70	66	66	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

The state does not have in place 1) a teacher identifier systems with the ability to match teachers and students and 2) student-level transcript information.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4	4	
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State has a high-quality plan to ensure that data from the State's statewide longitudinal data system are accessible to stakeholder groups with the exception of parents and students. Further, the State plans to make the data accessible by putting the information online; however, the State does not address how it will make the data available to stakeholders with internet access or whose first language is not English. The State through the creation of ICEPR ensures that the data will be used to support continuous improvement. Of note, it's unclear how ICEPR efforts are distinct from the P-20 Council.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	16	16	
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(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State's decision to use the LPMS system across all districts should accelerate the adoption of a standardized system. The State's strategy, however, for incenting migration to LPMS by Participating LEAs is adequate. The plan does not sufficiently outline a plan for ensuring LEAs use the robust expensive LPMS portal. The implementation of a cloud environment to allow LEAs to focus on "use" is forward thinking. Although the portal platform has not been developed, the principles outlined in the proposal, if implemented with fidelity, will significantly increase the collection of actionable data and its use in classroom instruction. The State's validation, by external groups, that their ambitious plan is necessary and achievable is affirming. It is not clear why the State is allowing LEAs to opt in or opt out of using LPMS. This decision may reduce

the State's ability to streamline and/or coordinate processes and unnecessarily expend resources and duplicate efforts. The proposal includes a solid plan for helping train educators at all levels. Further, the proposed "training the trainer" model is an important step to building local capacity and addressing scalability challenges. The State's proposal includes a misalignment between the resources being expended to develop LPMS and the number of LEAs the State expects to utilize the resource. The State plans to invest a significant amount of resources for a system that at the end of the grant cycle they hope 1/3 of participating LEAs use. Also, ICEPR is well-suited to make data available to researchers; however, given this decision to use an RFP process, the process has the potential to become a bottleneck.

Total	47	40	40
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	20	20	

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

The state has established and explained legal provisions that allow alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals. The State has a track record of using alternative routes to certification and has netted a significant number of teacher and school leaders. These programs, however, primarily place teachers and leaders in CPS. The alternative certification routes utilized by the State comply with the program elements defined in the notice. The State produces a report as required by law on "relative supply and demand for education staff" in the state. This report is used to monitor and evaluate areas of teacher and principal shortage. Data collection is rich, yet a description of the process the SEA or LEA uses to prepare teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage is missing.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	47	47	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	13	13	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8	8	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	21	21	

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

The State has established a clear approach to measuring student growth and using the measures in evaluations. The State's evaluation system builds on what works and starts with the school most in need of intervention – two important factors. The plan also contains rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals by ensuring key elements of their performance evaluation system aren't subject to local collective bargaining agreements, closing the waiver loophole, and embedding a default model for teacher evaluations that makes student growth 50% of their performance score. The plan also includes differentiated effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor for tenured and non-tenured educators. However, the proposal's decision to not evaluate tenured teachers annually and places ineffective tenured teachers through a longer evaluation process challenges the plan's goal of serious accountability. The proposal will create two types of annual evaluations, one for tenured teachers and one for everybody else. The State currently cannot include student growth in its evaluation, but has established a clear plan for future inclusion. The plan's decision to allow teachers and principals, in conjunction with their Superintendent, to determine which student growth measures to include for evaluation may provide wiggle room to possibly "game the system." The State's leveraging of its Super LEAs and utilization of multi-state collaborative provides a one-two punch –

Identifying a field of experts and employing them in a environment ready for reform. The development of teachers and principals seems to be contingent on the State's progress in developing their evaluation system, which is in development. The State's implementation timeline is ambiguous. The State decision against instituting a "pay for performance" system severely limits its ability to compensate effective teachers and principals. Further, its differentiated compensation model relies on outside grants; however, it is not clear why the State does not roll this project into its RtT application. The State's decision to rely on the public to hold LEAs accountable for including performance in evaluation decision seems more wishful than rigorous (compared to institutional policies). The State has described a strong plan – driven by the terms of the Participating LEAs MOU – to grant tenure and/or full certification to teachers and principals using rigorous standards and streamlined, and fair procedures. Also, the decision to include the data in their Educator Effectiveness Scorecard ensures transparency. The State is confident it can "statutorily tie poor evaluation rations to dismissal" in the future. In addition, the plan includes other ways the State can remove ineffective teachers without statute. This discussion is perceptive and critical given teachers, based on the number of unions that signed up and accompanying support letters, may provide robust opposition to legislative changes. Further, the plan of using Super LEAs as testing ground will provide insightful lesson that may or may not be relevant in other political landscapes.

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

The State has clarified how it plans to remove ineffective teachers without a change to state law - revoking certification on teachers with two years of poor performance evaluations. However, it is still unclear if the State has the ability or desire to use this backdoor method on ineffective teachers with tenure.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	22	22
(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	9	9

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

The State's plan does not describe what steps it will take after teacher distribution data is publically available. The State presents a high-quality plan for ensuring equitable distribution among future hire by addressing policy barriers e.g., collective bargaining and providing financial incentives, E3 plan. The plan does not, however, explain how it will address current challenges or inequities. The State has a plan in place for increasing the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas including mathematics, science, and special education. In fact, the State has supply exceeding funding among applications for their special education tuition wavier program. The State does not include the performance measures chart for this section, so it is difficult to assess if the State has clear goals for success and if it can achieve said goal. The plan does not include any baseline data. Further, the State does not explain how it will remove poor performing teachers from the classroom; this may lead to poor performing teachers being reshuffled to low-income poor performing school districts.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	11	11
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State lacks the COMPETES Act element to link teacher performance with student achievement. Their plan for building this capacity is clear and includes a firm implementation date. Also, the State's teacher preparation report, developed in conjunction with NCTQ, provides a deep-dive analysis and summative look at the State's teacher preparation program and foundation for future publically available reports. The State's plan does not discuss how it will link principal data to programs. The State's plan does not clearly explain how it will expand preparation and credentialing options; instead, the proposal focuses on proposals to

expand or reward program producing measurable results. Also, the plan does not discuss what it will do if programs are not effective.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	20	20	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The State has a clear plan for providing effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning and collaboration time to teachers and principals that are, where appropriate, ongoing and job-embedded. The State's strategy to build upon the success of current partners is smart and ensures the statewide strategic plan for induction and mentorship is based on effective practices. The State's plan to leverage the Measurement Plan it is developing as well as add additional indicators is a viable strategy for improving the effectiveness of supports towards improving student achievement.				
Total	138	120	120	

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	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
It's not clear from the State's plan if the State Superintendent can "directly intervene," since the State Board must first provide authorization. The State does describe what legal intervening steps the State can take for persistently low-achieving schools. Based on this understanding, full points are awarded.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The State's proposal includes a system for identifying low performing schools. The State has a history of turning around low-performing schools and has almost exclusively used the Transformation Model intervention. The state has articulated a coherent and ambitious plan, in particular around its focus on high school reform, for increasing student achievement and high school graduation, and reducing dropouts.				
Total	50	50	50	

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	7	7	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The State's funding levels for education have remained consistent. The state has sufficiently demonstrated mechanisms are in place to promote funding equity.				

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	29	34	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State has a high charter cap. The State only "expects" student achievement to be a significant factor. The State does give preference to schools serving similar population. The State does have laws regarding charter schools; however, the proposal (or the law) lacks a description of how student achievement is used as a significant factor. The majority of charter applications were denied for an "other" reason, yet the application does not provide details into the "other" reason. The State has a little north of 10% of their charters, which seems consistent with the State's low charter approval rate. Given the State's charter school funding range, it is difficult to clearly determine funding equity between charters and traditional public schools. Based on this understanding, low points are awarded. The State provides charters with funding that "may be used for facilities." The State's plan does not describe how it assists with facilities acquisition or provide the ability for charters to share in bonds and mill levies. In terms of facility-related regulations that may be stricter, LEAs have the option to charge charter schools a fee if the building used is not a conversion building. The statute described in the proposal seems to be limited to CPS schools. The State does not clarify whether other LEAs in the State can operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools.

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

Based on the discussion surrounding today's presentation, the State does require student achievement to be a significant factor in the authorization and renewal of a school's charter.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
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(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State's plan has demonstrated other reform conditions in Illinois, in particular in the area of early childhood education.

Total	55	41	46	
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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)

The State successfully integrates STEM strategies throughout its proposal. The State's application addresses the need to (i) offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering by 1) requiring participating LEAs serving grades 9 through 12 to establish at least two Programs of Study promoting critical STEM application areas; (ii) cooperate with STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content by 1) establishing "STEM Learning Exchanges" through public-private partnerships modeled on the State's successful agricultural education; and (iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics by 1) ensuring instruction integrates and vertically aligns to STEM standards and 2) expanding the Illinois Math and Science Partnership Program.

Total	15	15	15	
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The State's application demonstrates strong LEA participation and commitment to successfully implement and achieve its goals. The plan sufficiently describe how the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, will use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.				
Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	430	435	